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GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
LONDON BOMBAY SYDNEY

First published 1930
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & Co. LTD.
39-41 *Parker Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2*

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NOTE

THANKS are due to Mrs Naomi Mitchison and Messrs Jonathan Cape, Ltd., for permission to use "Gandoc the Briton," from *The Conquered*; to Mr Lloyd Osbourne, for "The Battle of Shoreby," from R. L. Stevenson's *The Black Arrow*; and to Messrs George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., for "A Poet of the Peasant Revolt," from J. C. Andrews' *Lords' Men of Littlebourne*.

A. E. M. B.
P. E. H.

INTRODUCTION

HOW do you look upon history—as a series of battles, an array of kings and queens, the story of the life of a nation ? It is all this and more, but we are asking you here to regard it as a pageant. If you look up the meaning of this word in a dictionary you will find that it is defined as a pompous show, a public spectacle, or something of that sort. In these days the cinema has to some extent taken the place of the pageant, but the idea is fundamentally the same. There is, and probably always will be, a popular demand for moving pictures. It is just as a moving picture that you are invited to consider the history of your own country.

In this book you will see a procession of kings and statesmen and warriors, but, more important still, you will find quite ordinary people represented, so that you will not be tempted to think that history is made solely by those whom the world has labelled *great*. A film does not depend entirely for its success on a few star performers : there is a part for the humble actor in every play. Thus in this pageant of history the peasant and the yeoman and the miner are presented in *rôles* every whit as important as those of the monarch and noble and leader of men.

It is said that every picture tells a story, but it is equally true that every story presents a picture. By means of these narratives we are trying to help you to see in your mind's eye the England of bygone ages, when conditions of life and ideas of religion, politics, war, and industry were different from those of to-day. It would be impossible

in a single book to give more than a few glimpses of the past, but these may serve to stimulate your interest in historical fiction and persuade you to read not only the novels from which they are taken, but other stories illustrating different periods. The range is extraordinarily wide : there are hundreds of romances for you to choose from, and you may find classified lists in most public libraries to help you in your selection.

But, you may ask, why take a pageant of history from fiction ? This brings us to the particular purpose of the writer whose aim is to reproduce the past as a living picture in the form of a story. If he dealt with facts alone, he might succeed in producing a good biography or a useful text-book, both of which are admirable in their way, but he would not be so free to use his imagination. In historical fiction an author tries to show a complete picture of a bygone age, so that the setting must be very full and ample. It is necessary, therefore, for him to supply both from his knowledge and his imagination a great many details beyond those required for a text-book. The setting is really the main source of interest, and must enable the reader to feel that he is reading a tale of other times, in which people dressed and spoke and acted differently, but lived their own lives as human beings and had human virtues and failings just as people of to-day have theirs. This constructive imagination enabled Scott to make a successful picture of life in the eighteenth century, as well as to reproduce a vivid scene such as the tournament at Ashby. Invention also plays a great part in creating imaginary characters. These, drawn from "all sorts and conditions of men," help to enrich the story and to give an impression of reality by their dress, speech, and ways of thinking, all of which must be typical of the age and social class to which they belong. They thus become 'probable' characters able to mingle with actual historical figures forming part of the setting.

It is interesting to compare the portraits of famous historical personages presented in fiction with actual portraits to be seen in illustrated books and picture-galleries. Wolsey, Cromwell, and Charles the First are probably all familiar. You can visualize their faces quite distinctly and imagine what sort of people they were. Now compare your own impressions with those of Harrison Ainsworth and Whyte-Melville. Notice, too, how various authors disagree in their estimate of these and other characters. In this way you will train yourselves to use judgment and discrimination.

One advantage in reviewing history through the eye of the novelist is that you can perceive and enjoy the human element. Studied scientifically, history lays stress upon cause and effect and treats men and women as instruments rather than persons. It is cold logic, not full-blooded drama. And, though reason is good, life is more attractive. We are offering you here a living picture that moves through the ages. It does not move out of England or English waters, but within these limits it provides a great variety of scene and story. You are invited to feast your eyes and to allow your feelings to be stirred. Incidentally you may come to realize that there is something in your heritage as English boys and girls of which you may justly be proud.

GANDOC THE BRITON

NAOMI MITCHISON

THE pageant opens with a scene of Britain nearly two thousand years ago, when Julius Cæsar, whose legions had overrun Northern Gaul, crossed the Channel to strike fear into the hearts of the Britons, and to check them from stirring up trouble among their kinsmen across the water.

So the winter and spring passed, and in summer they set out for Britain. Meromic was intensely excited; his master thought he might hate it, knowing how much Britons and Celts were one kin: not he! If Gandoc had sent his people two years before, it would have been another matter; as it was, he was looking forward to his revenge.

They lay for some time in the camp by the sea, waiting for a favourable wind. There Meromic used to see the Hæduan Dumnorix roaming about with his guard of horsemen always at his heels; he had heard him once making a speech to the half-hostage chiefs, telling them that Cæsar designed to take them over to Britain and there to murder them, that his own life was in danger, that the hope of Gaul lay in their rising together against the oppressor! He had watched him ride out at a fast trot, past the astonished sentries, at the head of his cavalry, and an hour later had heard the bugles all across the camp calling to saddle, and the steady pouring out of the pursuers. And late in the day he saw the Hæduans come

back, shamefaced and draggled, their standards drooping, and heard how Dumnorix had called on them in vain, and turned and died on the Roman swords, crying out that he was free, free, and the son of a free state !

The next day they sailed, and Meromic made himself useful among the sailors. The next week they were making their camp on a low hill ; eastward they looked back towards the blue sea, dying away to haze in the distance ; westward there was haze again, always haze in this island, but over trees, a forest with clearings in it, patches of corn, herds of swine and cattle, bridle-paths among the thick hazels. The ships had to be hauled up off the beach and earthworks built around them : it took time. While fifty miles further inland the king, Cassivellaun, was arming the tribes, assembling the war-chariots, sending out messengers with fire and spears to rouse the country against its invaders.

One day Meromic came to his master : “ If we come back within the week, will you let Lerrys and me go now ? And not ask me why ? ”

Titus hesitated for some time, but at last let them go and lent them arms ; the Gaul waved his hand once ; they plunged down a forest path and were out of sight.

Gandoc the Briton was now Chief among the Men of the Iron ; he had a house of timber, cattle and pigs herded about the woods, pack-ponies to carry the smelted iron down to the coast, and the very valuable friendship and protection of Cassivellaun. Just now the forges were all in full blast, but the pack-ponies were going north, carrying new-made weapons to the gathering-place of the armies among the rushes and dragon-flies of the Thames. Gandoc himself was plying the very honourable trade of a smith ; the hammers fell in time, the sparks flew, the bellows roared in the wood, the swords were beaten out, cooled in spring water, and packed in hay ready for their journey. The smiths wore aprons of hide from neck to

knee, and nothing else ; they sang as they worked, and their women brought them in great jugs of drink and loads of wood for the fires. One of them told Gandoc there was a stranger who wished to see him. " Let him come in," said the Briton, squinting along the straight spear-head he held in his tongs, almost too busy to wonder who this stranger could be.

The stranger stood in the door of the forge, wearing a Gallic dress ; he threw down his spear in token of friendship and said to Gandoc, " Do you remember me ? " Gandoc stared, saw, dropped the spear-head and started guiltily towards his own sword. Meromic laughed : " There's no need. You played an ill trick on me and mine, once ; but that's over. See, I've deserted from the Roman army to come to you : look at my Roman arms."

The smiths left their hammers and crowded round ; Lerrys was brought forward—another deserter ; only Gandoc hung back : " You blame me, I know. But I was going to send—it was a difficult year—we had everything ready and then the wind failed. Besides, we could have done no more than you did. We heard about the battle, but not what happened to you or your father : tell me ! And—and your sister ? "

The Gaul looked him full in the face : " Dead, all dead ; but we'll not talk about that."

" I'm sorry, very sorry. But I did what I could, believe me, Meromic."

" That's as may be ; but let us not think of it now."

" No, no ; there are other things. You'll come to my house ? " He led them up, still visibly nervous, keeping his distance from the son of the Wolf.

The others followed them in ; it seemed the moment to turn Gandoc's thoughts. Meromic leapt on to a bench and raised one hand for silence : " Brothers," he said, " brothers by blood and brothers by arms, brothers most of all through the cause you fight for ! I

come from the camp of your oppressors : you are right not to trust me. But look ”—and he bared his shoulder—“ this is the mark that should carry faith, this is the wound I got in the battle of the ships. Shall I forget it easily ? Not while waves break or leaves grow, not while the Gods we worship together are yet strong to help us, not while the groves are standing and the stones lie blood-wet to the sun ! I know there is a broken promise between us ; but yet there is this greater thing in my heart and in your hearts that makes that promise only a blown straw. We who are one kin, with one speech and one memory, we Celts, shall we not put old hatreds aside now we are in sight of the enemy ? I tell you, Britons, I was sick to see the Roman soldiers trampling your pastures ! My hope was your hope, my sword is your sword : use me how you will. I was a slave among the Romans, I am a free man again with you ; but it is you I will obey. For you are my people now that my own are dead, your chiefs I will follow, your arms I will bear, and with you I will go forward to drive the Romans out into the sea ! ”

The Britons shouted and clashed their spears ; Gandoc, with tears in his eyes, caught Meromic’s two hands and pressed them : “ You have a great heart ! ” he said. “ I was wrong to doubt you. You are my brother from this day on. Welcome, you and your friend, and take of mine what you will ; for I know by your words you must be true.” He brought them to the table, poured mead, and gave them meat and bread. Meromic could hardly speak ; his own words had moved him, he had said them with conviction ; and now this open trust and hospitality ! How could he carry out his plan ? These were his people, even as he had said : he must not betray them.

But as he sat there a tall woman came in, a woman with hazel-blue eyes and straight hair like washed flax ; she had a child by her side who ran over to Gandoc, calling

him father : a boy-child. So should his nephew have been ! He turned to Gandoc : " If you will, I can lead you by a hidden path to where you can look right over the Roman camp ; I can show you where the sentries are, and how each legion is lined ; will you come ? "

" I will surely ; to-morrow early, you shall both take the oath and we will set out at nightfall."

" It will take a day and a night to ride. What oath is it ? "

" You will go to the grove of the Shining One and you will swear faith to us and to the King Cassivellaun on the high stone of sacrifice. I do not ask this oath to bind you, because I believe in all you say, only it is the custom here, and a custom is never good to go against."

Meromic and Lerrys slept that night among the rushes on the hall floor ; during the first hours of the morning, Meromic woke his friend with a hand on his mouth, saying, " I can't take the oath, but you must, Lerrys ; they are not your Gods : they will not hurt you. I daren't. It's hard enough to do what I have to do, let alone breaking an oath to the Shining One. And they'll suspect unless you go. So there it is."

Lerrys stirred uneasily : " Meromic, I can't either. These Gods mayn't be my Gods, but I am in their country and they'll revenge themselves on me."

" Not they. You have never worshipped them, they don't know you ; it will mean nothing to them, just as the oath will mean nothing to you."

" But Gods are Gods everywhere. No, if I take this oath I can't and won't help you against what I have sworn."

" Lerrys, is this my reward for getting you out of that house ? Remember, if it hadn't been for me you might be there still, rotting in a prison all these warm nights."

" I know, and I feel it too, but—but——"

" Well, there's no more to be said then ; but I thought you'd do it for me, Lerrys."

Lerrys stared down at the rushes ; he thought of the Roman house, hurrying down hot passages, Marses standing over him with a whip in his hand ; he remembered the night when he and Meromic were awake and whispering in the close darkness of the slaves' quarters. Meromic would not be friends with him any more unless he took the oath. But these Gods : the Shining One—who was he ?—what were his powers ? Better not to ask. He would make a sacrifice later to his own Gods ; they might help him. He whispered, " I'll take it," and felt the other's hand close on his : it would be worth it to keep his friendship. " But what will you do so as not to have to take it yourself ? "

" You'll see to-morrow, Lerrys. And though this will matter nothing to you, yet I'm grateful. I'll repay you if I've a chance. But be sure there's no need for you to be afraid. Pray to your own Gods."

" My Gods are far off ; I do it for you." The other sleepers began to turn over and wake ; they said no more.

In the morning they all ate together from great wooden bowls of porridge and honey ; later they set out towards the Grove, laughing and talking with one another, and leaping the fallen trees in the fine early air. Suddenly Meromic fell with a cry, one foot in a rabbit hole ; he got to his feet, clinging to Gandoc's arm, limped on a few steps, but then stopped ; the Britons were sympathetic but he winced when they touched his ankle. He protested that he must go on to the Grove, but it was plain he could not walk ; Gandoc sent one of his men for a pony, but a minute or two afterwards Meromic fainted.

" You can't take the oath to-day," said his host ; " it's three miles further on, and you must be fit to ride this evening."

" Well, then," said Meromic, " as soon as we come back. My friend can take his now." He was helped on to the pony and went back, looking so sick that Lerrys

himself hardly knew what to think ; only the ankle wasn't really swollen. The Colchian looked after his friend, and then turned cheerfully back to the forest path again, and on towards the Grove, on towards the anger of the Shining One !

The flaxen-haired woman was nursing a younger baby, but she ran down at once to meet her guest, to bathe and bind up his ankle and to pile soft furs for him to lie on. While she was busy getting food, Meromic had time to wonder what she would say to her man's death by the broken faith of one who had eaten his bread. But what was the use of that ? This Briton had betrayed him and his folk : their bodies had rotted unavenged for nearly two years ; now it was Gandoc's turn for betrayal. Yet this woman and her children were innocent ; well, he would not kill them, though maybe he had the right to : Fiommar had been innocent too.

So the day passed. Sometimes the woman was talking to him or singing, sometimes she was busy with her household and her babies. Sometimes the clearing in front of the hall-door was brilliant with sunshine, sometimes it would suddenly cloud over. Sometimes Meromic was sure of himself, sometimes he was very doubtful.

In the Grove the oaks were beautiful and friendly with their thick shade ; the foxgloves rocked in the breeze. But Lerrys was frightened ; he wished he could see behind every tree ; the palms of his hands were sweating. The Druids led him up to the stone under the biggest oak-tree ; it was worn and stained with many sacrifices. He repeated the oath after them ; they held a hare on the stone and he slit its throat, watching the life die out of its eyes and its kicking grow still ; so would the Shining One slit his throat if he broke his oath. They came back along the path, and when a herd of pigs rushed across in front of them he was nearly choked by his own violent heart-beating. He was quick at picking up

languages, and could talk to the Britons a little, but now he could not think of the words ; he wanted to pray in his own tongue to his own Gods. When he was back at the house he looked more of a sick man than the bandaged Meromic.

They set out in the evening, with much praise of the Gaul for mounting so bravely, hurt foot and all. Their road lay along a flinty ridge with hollies at each side. Gandoc and Meromic rode ahead, and Lerrys rode behind ; every now and then he would glance over his shoulder, though there was nothing to be seen. The night came slowly and cloudlessly, a gradual starlight ; they slept for a few hours beside their ponies. " At least, nothing will happen *yet*," thought Lerrys. They rode on again with the first light ; the rising sun came full on to their faces—Lerrys did not know for certain whether *he* was the Shining One.

At mid-day they ate, and Gandoc asked how near the Roman camp was. " Five hours yet," said Meromic ; and then he began talking—as he could talk if he chose, a quick, coloured unravelling of words—about his home, about his father and about Fiommar. Vainly Gandoc tried to turn him to something else ; he went on speaking, to the trees, to the sky, anywhere. He told of his sister's death on the island, and how, one-handed, he had covered the last silky curl with earth, till all that was left was that mound and the stain on the crushed grass. " What do you say to that ? " he ended abruptly, turning to the Briton, who stammered a vague distress, and then he whistled, very deliberately, the first line of a Roman marching song. Lerrys heard : it was for him ; he edged his pony up, looked right and left at the thick wood, thought of his friendship, leant over and seized the Briton from behind by both elbows, jerking the reins away ; while Meromic, in front, had his dagger just pressing into Gandoc's throat and his left hand over his

mouth. They had him off his pony and down to the ground, tied fast and painfully with his own belt and theirs.

Lerrys held the three ponies, shivering, though it was a mild day. Meromic was crouching over his enemy, like a wolf over a deer, and he muttered, "This is for you, Fiommar!" And he laid his hands, with all his weight on them, on to Gandoc's shoulders, and looked him full in the face, hating him. Gandoc spat the leaves out of his mouth: "So! I should have known never to trust a Gaul!"

"You should have known never to trust a man you've betrayed."

Meromic got up and rubbed the dagger over the ball of his thumb, rocking from one foot to the other.

"And you didn't even twist your ankle!" Gandoc said, considering; "but that other took the oath! The Shining One is on his track now." He turned his head towards Lerrys: "Your throat—like the hare's. You'll die: kicking . . . soon."

Lerrys backed a step against the solid, reassuring ponies; Meromic put his foot hard down on to Gandoc's mouth.

"Listen, you! All that summer, two years ago, we waited for you to send; the wind was with you any time in four months. It was a shame on my sister that her man had deserted us; now I wipe out that shame. For want of your help my people died; for want of your help we were beaten in the end, my father was killed, and I was sold as a slave! Did you think I would let you live after that?—you who brought on me sorrow and blows and curses, all that house-full of pain! For my father's honour, for my sister's honour, my own honour, say is it justice that I kill you now!"

The Briton's mouth was bleeding, but he answered steadily enough: "Am I to answer you in your own

words, the words you spoke in my house, as my guest, two days ago? It comes ill from you to talk of your honour, you that have eaten with me and given me promises! What pledge have I broken that you have not broken too? I say you cannot set yourself up as my judge."

Meromic drew the point of the dagger slowly in a deep scratch across Gandoc's chest: he was thinking.

"You are talking of oaths," he said. "There's another oath of mine: I'd forgotten it; you shall help me to keep it. Lerrys"—he turned to his friend—"my oath to Titus Barrus: it would be good to give my enemy up to him; shall we do it?"

"Yes, yes!" cried Lerrys eagerly, "and the blood-guilt off our heads!"

"Don't think he'll escape me," Meromic said; then to Gandoc: "This is a better way—you're going to find out what happened to me, your turn to be a slave! And I shall be waiting behind you for my revenge, oh, it'll be sweeter so! Oh, I shall be glad to see you in chains! On to the horse with him!" He pulled Gandoc suddenly to his feet.

Gandoc looked from one to the other. "You—you Romans!" he said bitterly. They tied him on to his pony; Meromic would not let him speak again; he had frightened Lerrys too much already. They went on along the lonely path; Lerrys listened to the blood thudding in his own ears; it sounded like footsteps—the sun had gone in.

It was nearly evening when they heard a far-off trumpet call from the camp, and Gandoc made one last desperate appeal to the Gaul, not to give him up to the enemy, not to forswear by such a deed all Gallic kinship, not to be a traitor to all his young vows, his hopes of two and three years back! But Meromic did not listen; he had heard a voice he knew, leapt off his pony and ran forward to meet

Titus Barrus, and to tell him that he and Lerrys had taken a prisoner, one Gandoc.

"Not the Chief of the Men of Iron?" asked Quintus Velanius, from the other side.

"Yes, sir."

Both the officers were much excited: "We couldn't have got a better hostage!" "The one man we needed!" "Where is he?"

Gandoc was led off to headquarters, silently miserable; Titus Barrus came back to the tent later, to find the two slaves whispering together over the flaming wood, Meromic with one arm round Lerrys. He was very well pleased.

"What reward do you want, Meromic?"

"Nothing. This is my vengeance."

"How did you get him?"

The slaves glanced at one another; Lerrys kicked a log into the fire and looked round at his friend: "Tell him the whole truth. I want him to know; I want his advice." So Meromic told, not leaving out his own speech, nor all Gandoc had said.

Titus sat with his hands clasped between his knees, frowning, and, at the end, got up and walked about the tent for a minute or two to get it clear in his head, then stood still, pulled at the gold chain round his neck, and turned, a little grimly, to Meromic: "I don't like this. However much the man was your enemy, whatever wrong he had done you, it does not justify treachery. Two wrongs never make a right. If you hold your word to your kin so lightly, how do I know you will keep your oath to me?"

Meromic flushed hotly and made a step forward, his fists clenched: "If you think that, sir——!" He checked himself and looked away from the Roman, speaking low: "Would you have clean hands now if it was revenge for your sister, your father, and your friends? Besides, I swore nothing to him."

"Lerrys did swear ; you are playing with words, Meromic."

Meromic did not answer ; he was a slave and he had to take what his master said, whether he thought it just or unjust ; at any rate he had done what he meant to do.

Suddenly Lerrys was kneeling before Titus, looking up at him with dark, uneasy eyes : " There's no question but that I broke my oath. Oh, master, what am I to do ? "

Titus spoke more gently to him : " I think the guilt is mostly on Meromic, not on you. But oaths are not taken to be broken at once ; you know that. These Gods may have some power ; you had better both keep to the camp. We shall not stay in this island beyond autumn." He frowned again at the Gaul : " Now I shall have to go back and tell this story of yours. I wish to God I had never let you go : the islanders will think this is the Roman way ! "

Titus Barrus had rather an uncomfortable time for the rest of the summer, with his two slaves. Meromic went about like a man with a grievance, sullen, bad-tempered, slow at his work, not doing things unless he was told, absolutely impossible to talk to. Lerrys was not much better : he was very anxious to please, anxious to do whatever his friend left undone ; but it was little use having a slave who didn't hear what you told him because he was forever looking over his shoulder at something that wasn't there, who stopped in the middle of his work with a look as if the rat, gnawing away at the back of the tent, was his deadliest enemy, who seemed so tired he could hardly see straight, and indeed confessed that he dreamt every night of a throat-slitted hare with its head jerking over to its bent-up back, and sometimes he held the bloody knife and sometimes he felt his own head beginning to work backwards too. More than once their master would have sold them both and bought a sensible, well-trained man, only there was nobody to buy them—

he couldn't sell them to a dealer—and, anyhow, he felt rather directly responsible for them. The evening of the battle with the four Kentish kings, Titus came back tired out, after having gone the round of the camp, seeing to the defences, and for no special reason lost his temper completely with Meromic ; he tied him up to the tent-pole, broke a stick over his back without getting a cry out of him, untied him, and threw himself down on his blankets, saying, " What a fool I was ever to take you ! I ought to have had sense enough to mind my own business last autumn. As soon as ever I get back to Gaul I shall get rid of you both and be thankful ! "

Titus was wounded the next day, a spear-thrust through his leg ; he was knocked over by a great wave of British attackers under their great fighting-man, Lugotorix, and his own men had no time to re-form before they were swept back. He was hopelessly pinned to the ground by the spear, and his sword had been kicked out of reach ; he was trampled underfoot, he could make out nothing of what was happening ; he buried his face in his arms and waited, for how long he could not tell. When he was conscious again Memoric and Lerrys were washing and bandaging his wound, and a centurion was kneeling beside him, eager to give his news : the Britons had been beaten, the camp was safe, they had taken many prisoners and recaptured all their own.

" How was I found ? "

" No thanks to us, sir ; it was that man of yours " : the centurion pointed to Meromic. " He's a good fighter and no mistake ; we saw him standing over you, and five of them against him. He didn't wait, though, once you were safe ; he was off again into the thick of them. And if Lugotorix is prisoner, it's because he brought down his horse with a spear-cast ! "

Titus half raised himself to thank Meromic, but the Gaul was silent and frowning as usual.

The wound was not very serious, but it would mean ten or twelve days in bed, which would be quite unbearable if Meromic went on in his present temper. So the next morning Titus called to him to put the pillows straight behind his back, and then, when he couldn't face away, spoke to him seriously : " What's wrong with you, Meromic ? What's been the matter all this time ? It's no good always saying nothing ! After yesterday, I'm not going to sell you, and I'm sorry I beat you that evening. Won't you tell me what you want ? " At first Meromic would not say ; there seemed to be an impassable barrier between him and the Roman ; he was pure barbarian. But gradually, after much questioning, Titus got out of him what it was.

Gandoc was a very important hostage. While they had him in the camp, the iron could no longer be dug and smelted and wrought for Cassivellaun ; the Men of the Iron looked up to their Chief and would not have him sacrificed for any promises to the midland King. So Gandoc was guarded well and never given a chance of escape. But, on the other hand, it would be a pity to make too great an enemy of him ; even in this disappointing and pearl-less island of savages it was better that the Roman state should have friends ; one could hardly consider the Britons apart from the Gauls, and there every influence was important. Gandoc had therefore to be conciliated as well as guarded. The officers had him to eat with them and filled him with wonder at their cups and dishes, the furnishing of their tents, their harness, and their hog-maned Italian horses, none of which stood less than a head higher than the best of his own shaggy ponies. As a smith, too, he was very much interested in their armour ; he wanted to know how it was made, about the welding of the joints between breast-plate and back-plate, the tempering of the swords, the gold inlay on the officers' shields, most of all about the

making and handling of steel. They told him a certain amount and let him go to the camp forges and watch their armourers' methods, taking care that he did not learn too much. And then Cæsar had spoken to him, as Cæsar knew how, making the Briton feel strangely more important than he had ever done before, and yet at the same time a child before the strength of Rome. He had sent a message to the flaxen-haired woman that he was being well treated, and . . . altogether he was not so unhappy as he had expected to be.

But this was what had been angering Meromic all the time ; he saw his enemy, not suffering, not bound and cursing his fate, but strolling about the camp with some young officer among the salutes of the sentries, well housed and well fed, his wishes considered, his person respected—a fine sort of vengeance, that ! Fiommar and Kormiac lay cold underground ; and yet when he had their enemy in his power he had given him up for the sake of another oath, gratitude for the Roman—all his thanks to be accused of treachery !—and now the revenge was gone, the chance was missed, he was a shame on the house of the Wolf !

Titus tried to get Meromic calmed down, to tell him what good service he had done to Rome, after all—but “ That’s nothing to me ! ” cried the Gaul. “ Rome ! I hate Rome ! I made Gandoc prisoner for myself, and I gave him up for you—you—you ! ”

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Soon afterwards Cassivellaun sent his ambassadors to Cæsar ; the whole of the Roman army was back in the camp by the sea ; autumn had come, the acorns were dropping, the waves were beginning to run high, it was time to go back to Gaul. Everything was being got ready ; British chiefs and Roman officers had agreed very seriously on the tribute to be sent over every year, but

neither side really believed it would ever be paid. Titus Barrus had made a great collection of local things : furs, weapons, pottery, and ornaments ; now he had reluctantly to decide what would have to be left behind and what could be brought over. Lerrys was helping him to pack, and, in the intervals, was being kind to a new British slave Titus had bought, one Dith, Son of the Hornbeam, partly because he was sorry for him, partly because he hoped in this way to appease a little the Gods of Britain. Meromic was helping part of the time too, but he went out of his way to be brutal to Dith, and he was always going off to Headquarters to try and find out what was happening to Gandoc. At last he heard : the Men of the Iron had bought back their Chief with many promises, tribute of gold and iron, and a few lesser hostages. Gandoc was brought out among the cheers of his own men, shook hands all round with the friendly officers, and rode off with many small gifts, a finely-wrought cup from one, a bronze lamp from another, and a jar of Italian wine from a third. He was thinking about his children, his home, the ring of the hammers again, his own food and fire and bed ; he had forgotten Meromic.

Titus Barrus was due to embark with the first convoy ; he had seen to his men, checked the numbers, rounded up stragglers, got provisions and baggage safe into the hold, and at last given word for the anchor to be raised and the sails hoisted. When it was all done he went off to where his own things had been piled on deck. Lerrys was there, trying to talk to the unhappy Dith, who was bound hand and foot to the rail of the ship and had his eyes fixed on the high white cliffs, the last sight of his own island ; he would not answer Lerrys, only cowered away, shivering, partly sea-sick—he came from the inland Cassi—partly just miserable ; he had been wounded in several places, and now he was getting well—to this !

“ Where’s Meromic ? ” asked Titus.

Lerrys jumped up : “ Meromic ? Isn’t he with you, sir ? He said you’d told him to stay by you.”

“ Never. I thought he was here ; I wonder where he is.”

Lerrys looked troubled : “ I can’t think. Dith, Dith ! Have you seen Meromic—the Gaul ? ”

Dith answered slowly, not taking his eyes from the dimming coast-line : “ Yes, I saw him early this morning ; I’ve a message from him ; he hit me five times on the mouth to make me remember. He said when you asked for him I was to say he had gone after his revenge ; and if he never comes back it will not be that he has broken faith, but that the revenge has turned on his own head.” And Dith laid his cheek against the cool, damp wood of the railing, and hoped that something bad would come to this fierce, unfriendly Gaul, who had hurt him without reason.

Lerrys and his master looked at one another ; Lerrys spoke first : “ He must have followed Gandoc out of the camp ; if only I’d been with him ! He never said a word to me.”

“ And now we can’t hear anything for weeks ! ” . . . They landed near their old camp and the ships were made ready to cross again for the second contingent. And the rest of the army came back from Britain, but no Meromic.

By now their Legate, Crassus, had his legions camped among low hills in the country of the Bellovaci. One day Dith was going over to the horse-lines ; he wanted to do it in one journey instead of two, so he was trying to carry a bundle of hay, a sack of beans, a sack of oats, and a bucket of water, all at once. He ploughed along, cursing the sacks and spilling the water, almost sure Lerrys would send him back for more. Suddenly some one called him : “ Dith, Son of the Hornbeam ! ” He dropped the sacks—and looked round ; it was long since

he had been last called by his full name, and he was pleased. It was the Gaul—the man who had hit him, who, he hoped, was dead ! He made a grab for the sacks, expecting to be hit again ; but Meromic was friendly and smiling, he took them from him, threw them over one shoulder, and then took the bucket. Dith looked round at him cautiously ; he was very dirty, his hair hung down on his neck, solidly matted, except that at one side it was only just beginning to grow again over a long, red scar ; his knee was bandaged ; he wore an ox-hide with a hole in the middle for his head to go through, and a lot of woad ; and there was an axe at his belt, the haft tied round with a long piece of yellow hair.

“ You got your revenge ? ” said the Briton.

Meromic grinned : “ I did that.”

From “ The Conquered ”

A SPOILT PRINCE

LORD LYTTON

MORE than a thousand years have passed, and the reign of Edward the Confessor is nearing its end.

A hundred years after Cæsar's raids Britain became a Roman province, until, at the end of the fourth century, the Romans left the country a prey to German invaders, Angles and Saxons, who seized the land and drove the Britons to the wilds. In their turn the Anglo-Saxons had to struggle against the Danes, sometimes successfully, as in the days of Alfred, until Canute the Dane, after sharing the kingdom with the Saxon, Edmund the Ironside, became master of England and ruled wisely and well. Canute's line died out, and the Norman-bred descendant of the Saxon kings, Edward the Confessor, was chosen king. In the latter part of the reign of this weak ruler great power fell into the hands of Harold, Earl of Wessex, the son of Godwin.

Who is to succeed the childless Edward? His great-nephew, Edgar the Atheling, the last of the Saxon line? The strong man, Harold? Or William of Normandy?

THE next day Harold returned with Haco and a numerous train of his house-carles to the city. Their ride was as silent as that of the day before; but on reaching Southwark, Harold turned away from the bridge towards the left, gained the river-side, and dismounted at the house of one of his lihtsmen (a frankling or freed ceorl). Leaving

there his horse, he summoned a boat ; and, with Haco, was rowed over towards the fortified palace which then rose towards the west of London, jutting into the Thames, and which seems to have formed the outwork of the old Roman city. The palace, of remotest antiquity, and blending all work and architecture, Roman, Saxon, and Danish, had been repaired by Canute ; and from a high window in the upper story, where were the royal apartments, the body of the traitor Edric Streone (the founder of the House of Godwin) had been thrown into the river.

“ Whither go we, Harold ? ” asked the son of Sweyn.

“ We go to visit the young Atheling, the natural heir to the Saxon throne,” replied Harold in a firm voice. “ He lodges in the old palace of our kings.”

“ They say in Normandy that the boy is imbecile.”

“ That is not true,” returned Harold. “ I will present thee to him—judge. . . .”

The boat shot into a little creek, or rather canal, which then ran inland, beside the black and rotting walls of the fort. The two earl-born leapt ashore, passed under a Roman arch, entered a court, the interior of which was rudely filled up by early Saxon habitations of rough timber work, already, since the time of Canute, falling into decay (as all things did which came under the care of Edward), and mounting a stair that ran along the outside of the house, gained a low narrow door which stood open. In the passage within were one or two of the King’s house-carles who had been assigned to the young Atheling, with liveries of blue and Danish axes, and some four or five German servitors, who had attended his father from the emperor’s court. One of these last ushered the noble Saxons into a low, forlorn ante-hall ; and there, to Harold’s surprise, he found Alred the Archbishop of York, and three thegns of high rank, and of lineage ancient and purely Saxon.

Alfred approached Harold with a faint smile on his benign face :

“ Methinks—and may I think aright !—that thou comest hither with the same purpose as myself, and yon noble thegns.”

“ And that purpose ? ”

“ Is to see and judge calmly, if, despite his years, we may find in the descendant of the Ironsides such a prince as we may commend to our decaying king as his heir, and to the Witan as a chief fit to defend the land.”

“ Thou speakest the cause of my own coming. With your ears will I hear, with your eyes will I see, as ye judge, will judge I,” said Harold, drawing the prelate towards the thegns, so that they might hear his answer.

The chiefs, who belonged to a party that had often opposed Godwin’s house, had exchanged looks of fear and trouble when Harold entered ; but at his words their frank faces showed equal surprise and pleasure.

Harold presented to them his nephew, with whose grave dignity of bearing beyond his years they were favourably impressed. The group then conversed anxiously on the declining health of the king, the disturbed state of the realm, and the expediency, if possible, of uniting all suffrages in favour of the fittest successor. And, in Harold’s voice and manner, as in Harold’s heart, there was nought that seemed conscious of his own mighty stake and just hopes in that election. But, as time wore, the faces of the thegns grew overcast ; proud men and great satraps were they, and they liked it ill that the boy prince kept them so long in the dismal ante-room.

At length, the German officer, who had gone to announce their coming, returned ; and, in words, intelligible indeed from the affinity between Saxon and German, but still disagreeably foreign to English ears, requested them to follow him into the presence of the Atheling.

In a room yet retaining the rude splendour with which

it had been invested by Canute, a handsome boy, about the age of thirteen or fourteen, but seeming much younger, was engaged in the construction of a stuffed bird, a lure for a young hawk that stood blindfold on its perch. The employment made so habitual a part of the serious education of youth that the thegns smoothed their brows at the sight, and deemed the boy worthily occupied. At another end of the room, a grave Norman priest was seated at a table on which were books and writing implements ; he was the tutor commissioned by Edward to teach the Norman tongue and saintly lore to the Atheling. A profusion of toys strewed the floor, and some children of Edgar's own age were playing with them. His little sister Margaret was seated seriously, apart from all the other children, and employed in needle-work.

When Alred approached the Atheling, with a blending of reverent obeisance and paternal cordiality, the boy carelessly cried, in a barbarous jargon, half German, half Norman-French :

" There, come not too near, you scare my hawk. What are you doing ? You trample my toys, which the good Norman bishop William sent me as a gift from the duke. Art thou blind, man ? "

" My son," said the prelate, kindly, " these are things of childhood—childhood ends sooner with princes than with common men. Leave thy lure and thy toys, and welcome these noble thegns, and address them, so please you, in our own Saxon tongue."

" Saxon tongue !—language of villeins ! not I. Little do I know of it, save to scold a ceorl or a nurse. King Edward did not tell me to learn Saxon, but Norman ! and Godfroi yonder says that if I know Norman well, duke William will make me his knight. But I don't desire to learn anything more to-day." And the child turned peevishly from thegn and prelate.

The three Saxon lords interchanged looks of profound

displeasure and proud disgust. But Harold, with an effort over himself, approached, and said, winningly :

"Edgar the Atheling, thou art not so young but thou knowest already that the great live for others. Wilt thou not be proud to live for this fair country, and these noble men, and to speak the language of Alfred the Great ? "

"Alfred the Great ! they always weary me with Alfred the Great," said the boy, pouting. "Alfred the Great, he is the plague of my life ! if I am Atheling, men are to live for me, not I for them ; and if you tease me any more, I will run away to Duke William in Rouen ; Godfroi says I shall never be teased there ! "

So saying, already tired of hawk and lure, the child threw himself on the floor with the other children, and snatched the toys from their hands.

The serious Margaret then rose quietly, and went to her brother, and said, in good Saxon :

"Fie ! if you behave thus, I shall call you *niddering* ! "

At the threat of that word, the vilest in the language—that word which the lowest ceorl would forfeit life rather than endure—a threat applied to the Atheling of England, the descendant of Saxon heroes—the three thegns drew close, and watched the boy, hoping to see that he would start to his feet with wrath and in shame.

"Call me what you will, silly sister," said the child, indifferently, "I am not so Saxon as to care for your ceorlish Saxon names."

"Enow," cried the proudest and greatest of the thegns, his very moustache curling with ire. "He who can be called *niddering* shall never be crowned king ! "

"I don't want to be crowned king, rude man, with your laidly moustache ; I want to be made knight, and have a banderol and baldric—Go away ! "

"We go, son," said Alred mournfully.

And with slow and tottering step he moved to the door ; there he halted, turned back—and the child was pointing

at him in mimicry, while Godfroï, the Norman tutor smiled as in pleasure. The prelate shook his head, and the group gained again the ante-hall.

“Fit leader of bearded men ! fit king for the Saxon land !” cried a thegn. “No more of your Atheling Alred my father !”

“No more of him, indeed !” said the prelate, mournfully.

“It is but the fault of his nurture and rearing—a neglected childhood, a Norman tutor, German hirelings. We may remould yet the pliant clay,” said Harold.

“Nay,” returned Alred, “no leisure for such hopes, no time to undo what is done by circumstance, and, I fear, by nature. Ere the year is out the throne will stand empty in our halls.”

“Who then,” said Haco, abruptly, “who then—(pardon the ignorance of youth wasted in captivity abroad !)—who then, failing the Atheling, will save this realm from the Norman duke, who, I know well, counts on it as the reaper on the harvest ripening to his sickle ?”

“Alas, who then ?” murmured Alred.

“Who then ?” cried the three thegns, with one voice “why the worthiest, the wisest, the bravest ! Stand forth, Harold the Earl, Thou art the man !” And without awaiting his answer they strode from the hall.

From “Harold”

HOW THEY FOUGHT AT ALDRETH

CHARLES KINGSLEY

IF you read more of *Harold* you will find that the crown was given to Harold, and that William of Normandy crossed the Channel to wrest it from him at Hastings, where Harold was slain. The south of England was given to William's Norman followers, and other landowners were allowed to keep their lands as the new king's vassals. But the attitude of the Normans caused rebellions in the west and north, which William ruthlessly crushed. He bribed the Danes who were helping the northern rebels to leave the country, and the 'whole of England came into his hands, except the Isle of Ely, where the remnants of the English were gathered under Hereward the Wake. How the Isle at last fell to William, and how Hereward became his man, you may read in the book from which this episode is taken.

WHEN William heard that the Danes were gone he marched on Ely, as on an easy prey.

Ivo Taillebois came with him, hungry after those Spalding lands, the rents whereof Hereward had been taking for his men for now twelve months. William de Warenne was there, vowed to revenge the death of Sir Frederic his brother. Ralph Guader was there, flushed with his success at Norwich. And with them were all the Frenchmen of the east, who had been either expelled from their lands or were in fear of expulsion.

With them, too, was a great army of mercenaries,

ruffians from all France and Flanders, hired to fight for a certain term, on the chance of plunder or of fiefs in land. Their brains were all aflame with the tales of inestimable riches hidden in Ely. There were there the jewels of all the monasteries round: there were the treasures of all the fugitive English nobles; there were there—what was there not? And they grumbled when William halted them and hutted them at Cambridge, and began to feel cautiously the strength of the place—which must be strong, or Hereward and the English would not have made it their camp of refuge.

Perhaps he rode up to Madingley windmill; and saw fifteen miles away, clear up against the sky, the long line of what seemed nought but a low upland park, with the minster tower among the trees; and between him and them, a rich champaign of grass, over which it was easy enough to marshal the armies of Europe; and thought Ely an easy place to take. But men told him that between him and those trees lay a black abyss of mud and peat and reeds, Haddenham fen and Smithy fen, with the deep sullen West water or 'Ald-reche' of the Ouse winding through them. The old Roman road to Stretham was sunk and gone long since under the bog, whether by English neglect, or whether (as some think) by actual and bodily sinking of the whole land. The narrowest space between dry land and dry land was a full half-mile, and how to cross that half-mile no man knew.

What were the approaches on the west? There were none. Beyond Earith, where now run the great washes of the Bedford Level, was a howling wilderness of meres, eas, reed-ronds, and floating alder-beds, through which only the fen-men wandered, with leaping-pole and log-canoe.

What in the east? The dry land neared the island on that side. And it may be that William rowed round by Burwell to Fordham and Soham, and thought of

attempting the island by way of Barraway ; and saw beneath him a labyrinth of islands, meres, fens, with the Cam, increased by the volume of the Ouse, spreading far deeper and broader than now between Barraway and Thetford-in-the-Isle ; and saw, too, that a disaster in that labyrinth might be a destruction.

So he determined on the near and straight path, through Long Stanton and Willingham, down the old bridle-way from Willingham ploughed field ;—every village there, and in the isle likewise, had and has still its ‘ field,’ or ancient clearing of ploughed land—and then to try that terrible half-mile, with the courage and wit of a general to whom human lives were as those of the gnats under the hedge.

So all his host camped themselves in Willingham field, by the old earth work which men now call Belsar’s Hills ; and down the bridle-way poured countless men, bearing timber and faggots, cut from all the hills, that they might bridge the black half-mile.

They made a narrow firm path through the reeds, and down to the brink of the Ouse, if brink it could be called, where the water, rising and falling a foot or two each tide, covered the floating peat for many yards before it sunk into a brown depth of bottomless slime. They would make a bottom for themselves by driving piles.

The piles would not hold ; and they began to make a floating bridge with long beams, say the chroniclers, and blown-up cattle-hides to float them.

Soon they made a floating-sow, and thrust it on before them as they worked across the stream ; for they were getting under shot from the island.

Meanwhile the besieged had not been idle. They had thrown up a turf rampart on the island shore, and overhanging ‘ hoardings,’ or scaffolds, through the floor of which they could shower down missiles. And so they awaited the attack, contenting themselves with gliding in

and out of the reeds in their canoes, and annoying the builders with arrows and cross-bow bolts.

At last the bridge was finished, and the sow safe across the Westwater ; and thrust in, as far as it would float, among the reeds on the high tide. They in the fort could touch it with a pole.

The English would have destroyed it if they could. But The Wake bade them leave it alone. He had watched all their work, and made up his mind to the event.

“ The rats have set a trap for themselves,” he said to his men ; “ and we shall be fools to break it up till the rats are safe inside.”

So there the huge sow lay, black and silent, showing nothing to the enemy but a side of strong plank, covered with hide to prevent its being burned. It lay there for three hours, and The Wake let it lie.

He had never been so cheerful, so confident. “ Play the man this day, every one of you ; and ere nightfall you will have taught the Frenchman once more the lesson of York. He seems to have forgotten that. It is time to remind him of it.”

And he looked to his bow and to his arrows, and prepared to play the man himself ; as was the fashion in those old days, when a general proved his worth by hitting harder and more surely than any of his men.

At last the army was in motion, and Willingham field opposite was like a crawling ants’ nest. Brigade after brigade moved down to the reed beds, and the assault began.

And now advanced along the causeway, and along the bridge, a dark column of men, surmounted by glittering steel ; knights in complete mail ; footmen in leather coats and jerkins ; at first orderly enough, each under the banner of his lord ; but more and more mingled and crowded, as each hurried forward, eager for his selfish share of the inestimable treasures of Ely. They pushed

along the bridge. The mass became more and more crowded ; men stumbled over each other, and fell off into the mire and water, calling vainly for help ; but their comrades hurried on unheeding, in the mad thirst for spoil.

On they came in thousands ; and fresh thousands streamed out of the fields, as if the whole army intended to pour itself into the isle at once.

" They are numberless," said Torfrida, in a serious and astonished voice, as she stood by Hereward's side.

" Would they were ! " said Hereward. " Let them come on, thick and threefold. The more their numbers, the fatter will the fish below be, before to-morrow morning. Look there, already ! "

And already the bridge was swaying, and sinking beneath their weight. The men, in places, were ankle deep in water. They rushed on all the more eagerly ; filled the sow, and swarmed up to its roof.

Then, what with its own weight, what with the weight of the laden bridge which dragged upon it from behind, the huge sow began to tilt backwards, and slide down the slimy bank.

The men on the top tried vainly to keep their footing ; to hurl grapnels into the rampart ; to shoot off their quarrels and arrows.

" You must be quick, Frenchmen," shouted Hereward in derision, " if you mean to come on board here."

The French knew that well ; and as Hereward spoke, two panels in the front of the sow creaked on their hinges, and dropped landward, forming two drawbridges, over which reeled to the attack a close body of knights, mingled with soldiers bearing scaling ladders.

They recoiled. Between the ends of the drawbridges and the foot of the rampart was some two fathoms' breadth of black ooze. The catastrophe which The Wake had foreseen was come, and a shout of derision arose from the unseen defenders above.

“Come on, leap it like men ! Send back for your horses, knights, and ride them at it like bold huntsmen !”

The front rank could not but rush on, for the pressure behind forced them forward, whether they would or not. In a moment they were wallowing waist deep ; trampled on ; disappearing under their struggling comrades, who disappeared in their turn.

“Look, Torfrida ! If they plant their scaling ladders, it will be on a foundation of their comrades’ corpses.”

Torfrida gave one glance through the openings of the hoarding upon the writhing mass below, and turned away in horror. The men were not so merciful. Down between the hoarding beams rained stones, javelins, arrows, increasing the agony and death. The scaling ladders would not stand in the mire ; if they had stood a moment, the struggles of the dying would have thrown them down. And still fresh victims pressed on from behind, shouting, “Dex Aie ! On to the gold of Ely !” and still the sows, under the weight, slipped farther and farther back into the stream, and the foul gulf widened between besiegers and besieged.

At last one scaling ladder was planted upon the bodies of the dead, and hooked firmly on the gunwale of the hoarding. Ere it could be hurled off again by the English, it was so crowded with men that even Hereward’s strength was insufficient to lift it off. He stood at the top ready to hew down the first comer ; and he hewed him down.

But the French were not to be daunted. Man after man dropped dead from the ladder top—man after man took his place ; sometimes scrambling over each other’s backs.

The English, even in the insolence of victory, cheered them with honest admiration. “You are fellows worth fighting, you French !”

“So we are,” shouted a knight, the first and last who

crossed that parapet ; for, thrusting Hereward back with a blow of his sword-hilt, he staggered past him over the hoarding, and fell on his knees.

A dozen men were upon him, but he was up again and shouting :

“ To me, men-at-arms ! A Deda ! A Deda ! ” But no man answered.

“ Yield ! ” quoth Hereward.

Sir Deda answered by a blow on Hereward’s helmet, which felled The Wake to his knees, and broke the sword into twenty splinters.

“ Well hit ! ” said Hereward, as he rose. “ Don’t touch him, men ! This is my quarrel now. Yield, sir ! You have done enough for your honour. It is madness to throw away your life.”

The knight looked round on the fierce ring of faces, in the midst of which he stood alone.

“ To none but The Wake.”

“ The Wake am I.”

“ Ah,” said the knight, “ had I but hit a little harder ! ”

“ You would have broke your sword into more splinters. My armour is enchanted. So yield like a reasonable and valiant man.”

“ What care I ? ” said the knight, stepping on to the earthwork and sitting down quietly. “ I vowed to St Mary and King William that into Ely I would get this day ; and in Ely I am ; so I have done my work.”

“ And now you shall taste—as such a gallant knight deserves—the hospitality of Ely.”

It was Torfrida who spoke.

“ My husband’s prisoners are mine ; and I, when I find them such gallant knights as you are, have no lighter chains for them than that which a lady’s bower can afford.”

Sir Deda was going to make an equally courteous answer, when over and above the shouts and curses of the

combatants rose a yell so keen, so dreadful, as made all hurry forward to the rampart.

That which The Wake had foreseen was come at last. The bridge, strained more and more by its living burden, and by the falling tide, had parted—not at the Ely end, where the sliding of the sow took off the pressure—but at the end nearest the camp. One sideway roll it gave, and then, turning over, engulfed in that foul stream the flower of Norman chivalry ; leaving a line—a full quarter of a mile in length—of wretches drowning in the dark water, or, more hideous still, in the bottomless slime of peat and mud.

Thousands are said to have perished. Their armour and weapons were found at times by delvers and dykers for centuries after ; are found at times unto this day, beneath the rich drained cornfields which now fill up that black half-mile ; or in the bed of the narrow brook to which the Westwater, robbed of its streams by the Bedford Level, has dwindled down at last.

William, they say, struck his tents and departed forthwith, “ groaning from deep grief of heart.” Eastward he went, and encamped the remains of his army at Brandon, where he seems to have begun that castle, the ruins of which still exist in Weeting Park hard by. He put a line of sentinels along the Rech-dyke, which men now call the Devil’s Ditch ; and did his best to blockade the isle, as he could not storm it. And so ended the first battle of Aldreth.

From “ Hereward the Wake ”

THE TOURNAMENT AT ASHBY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

WE now pass over more than a hundred years and are reaching the close of the twelfth century and the reign of Richard the Lion-heart. The story of Richard's crusade and of his quarrel with Leopold of Austria you can read in Scott's *Talisman*. This extract shows you something of the state of England at the time when the treacherous Prince John thought that his brother was still a prisoner abroad. Notice that the descendants of the Normans and the Saxons are still very far apart in their tastes and thoughts.

THE lists now presented a most splendid spectacle. The sloping galleries were crowded with all that was noble, great, wealthy, and beautiful in the northern and midland parts of England ; and the contrast of the various dresses of these dignified spectators rendered the view as gay as it was rich, while the interior and lower space, filled with the substantial burgesses and yeomen of merry England, formed, in their more plain attire, a dark fringe or border around this circle of brilliant embroidery, relieving, and, at the same time, setting off its splendour.

The heralds finished their proclamation with their usual cry of " Largesse, largesse, gallant knights ! " and gold and silver pieces were showered on them from the galleries, it being a high point of chivalry to exhibit liberality towards those whom the age accounted at once

the secretaries and the historians of honour. The bounty of the spectators was acknowledged by the customary shouts of "Love of Ladies—Death of Champions—Honour to the Generous—Glory to the Brave!" To which the more humble spectators added their acclamations, and a numerous band of trumpeters the flourish of their martial instruments. When these sounds had ceased, the heralds withdrew from the lists in gay and glittering procession, and none remained within them save the marshals of the field, who, armed cap-à-pie, sat on horseback, motionless as statues, at the opposite ends of the lists. Meantime, the enclosed space at the northern extremity of the lists, large as it was, was now completely crowded with knights desirous to prove their skill against the challengers, and, when viewed from the galleries, presented the appearance of a sea of waving plumage, intermixed with glistening helmets and tall lances, to the extremities of which were, in many cases, attached small pennons of about a span's breadth, which, fluttering in the air as the breeze caught them, joined with the restless motion of the feathers to add liveliness to the scene.

At length the barriers were opened, and five knights, chosen by lot, advanced slowly into the area, a single champion riding in front, and the other four following in pairs. All were splendidly armed, and my Saxon authority (in the Wardour Manuscript) records at great length their devices, their colours, and the embroidery of their horse trappings. . . . As the procession entered the lists, the sound of a wild barbaric music was heard from behind the tents of the challengers, where the performers were concealed. It was of Eastern origin, having been brought from the Holy Land; and the mixture of the cymbals and bells seemed to bid welcome at once, and defiance, to the knights as they advanced. With the eyes of an immense concourse of spectators fixed upon them, the five knights advanced up the platform upon which the

tents of the challengers stood, and there separating themselves, each touched slightly, and with the reverse of his lance, the shield of the antagonist to whom he wished to oppose himself.

Having intimated their more pacific purpose, the champions retreated to the extremity of the lists, where they remained drawn up in a line; while the challengers, sallying each from his pavilion, mounted their horses, and, headed by Brian de Bois-Guilbert, descended from the platform, and opposed themselves individually to the knights who had touched their respective shields.

At the flourish of clarions and trumpets, they started out against each other at full gallop; and such was the superior dexterity or good fortune of the challengers, that those opposed to Bois-Guilbert, Malvoisin, and Front-de-Bœuf, rolled on the ground. The antagonist of Grantmesnil, instead of bearing his lance-point fair against the crest or the shield of his enemy, swerved so much from the direct line as to break the weapon athwart the person of his opponent—a circumstance which was accounted more disgraceful than that of being actually unhorsed, because the latter might happen from accident, whereas the former evinced awkwardness and want of management of the weapon and of the horse. The fifth knight alone maintained the honour of his party, and parted fairly with the Knight of St John, both splintering their lances without advantage on either side.

The shouts of the multitude, together with the acclamations of the heralds, and the clangour of the trumpets, announced the triumph of the victors and the defeat of the vanquished. The former retreated to their pavilions, and the latter, gathering themselves up as they could, withdrew from the lists in disgrace and dejection, to agree with their victors concerning the redemption of their arms and their horses, which, according to the laws of the tournament, they had forfeited. The fifth of their number alone tarried

in the lists long enough to be greeted by the applauses of the spectators, amongst whom he retreated, to the aggravation, doubtless, of his companions' mortification.

A second and a third party of knights took the field ; and although they had various success, yet, upon the whole, the advantage decidedly remained with the challengers, not one of whom lost his seat or swerved from his charge—misfortunes which befell one or two of their antagonists in each encounter. The spirits, therefore, of those opposed to them seemed to be considerably damped by their continued success. Three knights only appeared on the fourth entry, who, avoiding the shields of Bois-Guilbert and Front-de-Bœuf, contented themselves with touching those of the three other knights, who had not altogether manifested the same strength and dexterity. This politic selection did not alter the fortune of the field—the challengers were still successful : one of their antagonists was overthrown, and both the others failed in the *attaint*,¹—that is, in striking the helmet and shield of their antagonist firmly and strongly, with the lance held in a direct line, so that the weapon might break unless the champion was overthrown.

After this fourth encounter there was a considerable pause ; nor did it appear that any one was very desirous of renewing the contest. The spectators murmured among themselves ; for, among the challengers, Malvoisin and Front-de-Bœuf were unpopular from their characters, and the others, except Grantmesnil, were disliked as strangers and foreigners.

But none shared the general feeling of dissatisfaction so keenly as Cedric the Saxon, who saw, in each advantage gained by the Norman challengers, a repeated triumph over the honour of England. His own education had taught him no skill in the games of chivalry, although,

¹ This term of chivalry, transferred to the law, gives the phrase of being attainted of treason.

with the arms of his Saxon ancestors, he had manifested himself, on many occasions, a brave and determined soldier. He looked anxiously to Athelstane, who had learned the accomplishments of the age, as if desiring that he should make some personal effort to recover the victory which was passing into the hands of the Templar and his associates. But, though both stout of heart and strong of person, Athelstane had a disposition too inert and unambitious to make the exertions which Cedric seemed to expect from him.

“The day is against England, my lord,” said Cedric, in a marked tone; “are you not tempted to take the lance?”

“I shall tilt to-morrow,” answered Athelstane, “in the *mêlée*; it is not worth while for me to arm myself to-day.”

Two things displeased Cedric in this speech. It contained the Norman word *mêlée* (to express the general conflict), and it evinced some indifference to the honour of the country; but it was spoken by Athelstane, whom he held in such profound respect, that he would not trust himself to canvass his motives or his foibles. Moreover, he had no time to make any remark, for Wamba thrust in his word, observing, “It was better, though scarce easier, to be the best man among a hundred, than the best man of two.”

Athelstane took the observation as a serious compliment; but Cedric, who better understood the Jester’s meaning, darted at him a severe and menacing look, and lucky it was for Wamba, perhaps, that the time and place prevented his receiving, notwithstanding his place and service, more sensible marks of his master’s resentment.

The pause in the tournament was still uninterrupted, excepting by the voices of the heralds exclaiming—“Love of ladies, splintering of lances! Stand forth, gallant knights, fair eyes look upon your deeds!”

The music also of the challengers breathed from time to time wild bursts expressive of triumph or defiance;

while the clowns grudged a holiday which seemed to pass away in inactivity ; and old knights and nobles lamented in whispers the decay of martial spirit, spoke of the triumphs of their younger days, but agreed that the land did not now supply dames of such transcendent beauty as had animated the jousts of former times. Prince John began to talk to his attendants about making ready the banquet, and the necessity of adjudging the prize to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had, with a single spear, overthrown two knights and foiled a third.

At length, as the Saracenic music of the challengers concluded one of those long and high flourishes with which they had broken the silence of the lists, it was answered by a solitary trumpet, which breathed a note of defiance from the northern extremity. All eyes were turned to see the new champion which these sounds announced, and no sooner were the barriers opened than he paced into the lists. As far as could be judged of a man sheathed in armour, the new adventurer did not greatly exceed the middle size, and seemed to be rather slender than strongly made. His suit of armour was formed of steel richly inlaid with gold, and the device on his shield was a young oak-tree pulled up by the roots, with the Spanish word *Desdichado*, signifying Disinherited. He was mounted on a gallant black horse, and as he passed through the lists he gracefully saluted the Prince and the ladies by lowering his lance. The dexterity with which he managed his steed, and something of youthful grace which he displayed in his manner, won him the favour of the multitude, which some of the lower classes expressed by calling out, " Touch Ralph de Vipont's shield—touch the Hospitaller's shield ; he has the least sure seat, he is your cheapest bargain."

The champion, moving onward amid these well-meant hints, ascended the platform by the sloping alley which led to it from the lists, and, to the astonishment of all

present, riding straight up to the central pavilion, struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Brian de Bois-Guilbert until it rung again. All stood astonished at his presumption, but none more than the redoubted Knight whom he had thus defied to mortal combat, and who, little expecting so rude a challenge, was standing carelessly at the door of the pavilion.

"Have you confessed yourself, brother," said the Templar, "and have you heard mass this morning, that you peril your life so frankly?"

"I am fitter to meet death than thou art," answered the Disinherited Knight; for by this name the stranger had recorded himself in the books of the tourney.

"Then take your place in the lists," said Bois-Guilbert, "and look your last upon the sun, for this night thou shalt sleep in paradise."

"Gramercy for thy courtesy," replied the Disinherited Knight; "and to requite it, I advise thee to take a fresh horse and a new lance, for by my honour you will need both."

Having expressed himself thus confidently, he reined his horse backward down the slope which he had ascended, and compelled him in the same manner to move backward through the lists, till he reached the northern extremity, where he remained stationary, in expectation of his antagonist. This feat of horsemanship again attracted the applause of the multitude.

However incensed at his adversary for the precautions which he recommended, Brian de Bois-Guilbert did not neglect his advice; for his honour was too nearly concerned to permit his neglecting any means which might ensure victory over his presumptuous opponent. He changed his horse for a proved and fresh one of great strength and spirit. He chose a new and tough spear, lest the wood of the former might have been strained in the previous encounters he had sustained. Lastly, he laid aside his shield, which had received some little

damage, and received another from his squires. His first had only borne the general device of his rider, representing two knights riding upon one horse, an emblem expressive of the original humility and poverty of the Templars qualities which they had since exchanged for the arrogance and wealth that finally occasioned their suppression. Bois-Guilbert's new shield bore a raven in full flight holding in its claws a skull, and bearing the motto, *Garde le Corbeau*.

When the two champions stood opposed to each other at the two extremities of the lists, the public expectation was strained to the highest pitch. Few augured the possibility that the encounter could terminate well for the Disinherited Knight, yet his courage and gallantry secured the general good wishes of the spectators.

The trumpets had no sooner given the signal, than the champions vanished from their posts with the speed of lightning, and closed in the centre of the lists with the shock of a thunderbolt. The lances burst into shivers up to the very grasp, and it seemed at the moment that both knights had fallen, for the shock had made each horse recoil backwards upon its haunches. The address of the riders recovered their steeds by use of the bridle and spur and having glared on each other for an instant with eyes which seemed to flash fire through the bars of their visors each made a demivolte, and, retiring to the extremity of the lists, received a fresh lance from the attendants.

A loud shout from the spectators, waving of scarfs and handkerchiefs, and general acclamations, attested the interest taken by the spectators in this encounter, the most equal, as well as the best performed, which had graced the day. But no sooner had the knights resumed their station than the clamour of applause was hushed into a silence so deep and so dead, that it seemed the multitude were afraid even to breathe.

A few minutes' pause having been allowed, that the

combatants and their horses might recover breath, Prince John with his truncheon signed to the trumpets to sound the onset. The champions a second time sprung from their stations, and closed in the centre of the lists, with the same speed, the same dexterity, the same violence, but not the same equal fortune as before.

In this second encounter, the Templar aimed at the centre of his antagonist's shield, and struck it so fair and forcibly that his spear went to shivers, and the Disinherited Knight reeled in his saddle. On the other hand, that champion had, in the beginning of his career, directed the point of his lance towards Bois-Guilbert's shield ; but, changing his aim almost in the moment of encounter, he addressed it to the helmet, a mark more difficult to hit, but which, if attained, rendered the shock more irresistible. Fair and true he hit the Norman on the visor, where his lance's point kept hold of the bars. Yet, even at this disadvantage, the Templar sustained his high reputation, and had not the girths of his saddle burst, he might not have been unhorsed. As it chanced, however, saddle, horse, and man rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.

To extricate himself from the stirrups and fallen steed was to the Templar scarce the work of a moment ; and, stung with madness, both at his disgrace and at the acclamations with which it was hailed by the spectators, he drew his sword and waved it in defiance of his conqueror. The Disinherited Knight sprung from his steed, and also unsheathed his sword. The marshals of the field, however, spurred their horses between them, and reminded them that the laws of the tournament did not, on the present occasion, permit this species of encounter.

"We shall meet again, I trust," said the Templar, casting a resentful glance at his antagonist ; "and where there are none to separate us."

"If we do not," said the Disinherited Knight, "the fault

shall not be mine. On foot or horseback, with spear, with axe, or with sword, I am alike ready to encounter thee."

More and angrier words would have been exchanged, but the marshals, crossing their lances betwixt them, compelled them to separate. The Disinherited Knight returned to his first station, and Bois-Guilbert to his tent, where he remained for the rest of the day in an agony of despair.

Without alighting from his horse, the conqueror called for a bowl of wine, and opening the beaver, or lower part of his helmet, announced that he quaffed it, "To all true English hearts, and to the confusion of foreign tyrants." He then commanded his trumpet to sound a defiance to the challengers, and desired a herald to announce to them that he should make no election, but was willing to encounter them in the order in which they pleased to advance against him.

The gigantic Front-de-Bœuf, armed in sable armour, was the first who took the field. He bore on a white shield a black bull's head, half-defaced by the numerous encounters which he had undergone, and bearing the arrogant motto, *Cave, Adsum*. Over this champion the Disinherited Knight obtained a slight but decisive advantage. Both knights broke their lances fairly, but Front-de-Bœuf, who lost a stirrup in the encounter, was adjudged to have the disadvantage.

In the stranger's third encounter, with Sir Philip Malvoisin, he was equally successful; striking that baron so forcibly on the casque, that the laces of the helmet broke, and Malvoisin, only saved from falling by being unhelmeted, was declared vanquished, like his companions.

In his fourth combat, with De Grantmesnil, the Disinherited Knight showed as much courtesy as he had hitherto evinced courage and dexterity. De Grantmesnil's horse, which was young and violent, reared and plunged in the course of the career so as to disturb the

rider's aim; and the stranger, declining to take the advantage which this accident afforded him, raised his lance, and passing his antagonist without touching him, wheeled his horse and rode back again to his own end of the lists, offering his antagonist, by a herald, the chance of a second encounter. This De Grantmesnil declined, avowing himself vanquished as much by the courtesy as by the address of his opponent.

Ralph de Vipont summed up the list of the stranger's triumphs, being hurled to the ground with such force that the blood gushed from his nose and his mouth, and he was borne senseless from the lists.

The acclamations of thousands applauded the unanimous award of the Prince and marshals, announcing that day's honours to the Disinherited Knight. . . .

Prince John was about to give the signal for retiring from the lists, when a small billet was put into his hand.

"From whence?" said Prince John, looking at the person by whom it was delivered.

"From foreign parts, my lord, but from whence I know not," replied his attendant. "A Frenchman brought it hither, who said he had ridden night and day to put it into the hands of your highness."

The Prince looked narrowly at the superscription, and then at the seal, placed so as to secure the floss-silk with which the billet was surrounded, and which bore the impression of three fleurs-de-lis. John then opened the billet with apparent agitation, which visibly and greatly increased when he had perused the contents, which were expressed in these words—

"Take heed to yourself, for the Devil is unchained!"

The Prince turned as pale as death, looked first on the earth, and then up to heaven, like a man who has received news that sentence of execution has been passed upon him. Recovering from the first effects of his surprise, he took

Waldemar Fitzurse and De Bracy aside, and put the billet into their hands successively. "It means," he added, in a faltering voice, "that my brother Richard has obtained his freedom."

"This may be a false alarm or a forged letter," said De Bracy.

"It is France's own hand and seal," replied Prince John.

"It is time, then," said Fitzurse, "to draw our party to a head, either at York, or some other central place. A few days later, and it will be indeed too late. Your highness must break short this present mummery."

"The yeomen and commoners," said De Bracy, "must not be dismissed discontented, for lack of their share in the sports."

"The day," said Waldemar, "is not yet very far spent—let the archers shoot a few rounds at the target, and the prize be adjudged. This will be an abundant fulfilment of the Prince's promises, so far as this herd of Saxon serfs is concerned."

"I thank thee, Waldemar," said the Prince; "thou remindest me, too, that I have a debt to pay to that insolent peasant who yesterday insulted our person. Our banquet also shall go forward to-night as we proposed. Were this my last hour of power, it should be an hour sacred to revenge and to pleasure—let new cares come with to-morrow's new day."

The sound of the trumpets soon recalled those spectators who had already begun to leave the field; and proclamation was made that Prince John, suddenly called by high and peremptory public duties, held himself obliged to discontinue the entertainments of to-morrow's festival: nevertheless, that, unwilling so many good yeomen should depart without a trial of skill, he was pleased to appoint them, before leaving the ground, presently to execute the competition of archery intended for the morrow. To the best archer a prize was to be

awarded, being a bugle-horn, mounted with silver, and a silken baldric richly ornamented with a medallion of St Hubert, the patron of silvan sport.

More than thirty yeomen at first presented themselves as competitors, several of whom were rangers and under-keepers in the royal forests of Needwood and Charnwood. When, however, the archers understood with whom they were to be matched, upwards of twenty withdrew themselves from the contest, unwilling to encounter the dishonour of almost certain defeat. For in those days the skill of each celebrated marksman was as well known for many miles round him as the qualities of a horse trained at Newmarket are familiar to those who frequent that well-known meeting.

The diminished list of competitors for silvan fame still amounted to eight. Prince John stepped from his royal seat to view more nearly the persons of these chosen yeomen, several of whom wore the royal livery. Having satisfied his curiosity by this investigation, he looked for the object of his resentment, whom he observed standing on the same spot, and with the same composed countenance which he had exhibited upon the preceding day.

"Fellow," said Prince John, "I guessed by thy insolent babble thou wert no true lover of the long-bow, and I see thou darest not adventure thy skill among such merry men as stand yonder."

"Under favour, sir," replied the yeoman, "I have another reason for refraining to shoot, besides the fearing discomfiture and disgrace."

"And what is thy other reason?" said Prince John, who, for some cause which perhaps he could not himself have explained, felt a painful curiosity respecting this individual.

"Because," replied the woodsman, "I know not if these yeomen and I are used to shoot at the same marks; and because, moreover, I know not how your Grace might

relish the winning of a third prize by one who has unwittingly fallen under your displeasure."

Prince John coloured as he put the question, "What is thy name, yeoman?"

"Locksley," answered the yeoman.

"Then, Locksley," said Prince John, "thou shalt shoot in thy turn, when these yeomen have displayed their skill. If thou carriest the prize, I will add to it twenty nobles; but if thou lovest it, thou shalt be stripped of thy Lincoln green, and scourged out of the lists with bowstrings, for a wordy and insolent braggart."

"And how if I refuse to shoot on such a wager?" said the yeoman.—"Your Grace's power, supported, as it is, by so many men-at-arms, may indeed easily strip and scourge me, but cannot compel me to bend or to draw my bow."

"If thou refusest my fair proffer," said the Prince, "the Provost of the lists shall cut thy bowstring, break thy bow and arrows, and expel thee from the presence as a faint-hearted craven."

"This is no fair chance you put on me, proud Prince," said the yeoman, "to compel me to peril myself against the best archers of Leicester and Staffordshire, under the penalty of infamy if they should overshoot me. Nevertheless, I will obey your pleasure."

"Look to him close, men-at-arms," said Prince John "his heart is sinking; I am jealous lest he attempt to escape the trial.—And do you, good fellows, shoot boldly round; a buck and a butt of wine are ready for your refreshment in yonder tent, when the prize is won."

A target was placed at the upper end of the southern avenue which led to the lists. The contending archers took their station in turn, at the bottom of the southern access, the distance between that station and the mark allowing full distance for what was called a shot at rovers. The archers, having previously determined by lot their

order of precedence, were to shoot each three shafts in succession. The sports were regulated by an officer of inferior rank, termed the Provost of the Games ; for the high rank of the marshals of the lists would have been held degraded, had they condescended to superintend the sports of the yeomanry.

One by one the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts yeomanlike and bravely. Of twenty-four arrows, shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it that, considering the distance of the mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shafts which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin, who was accordingly pronounced victorious.

"Now, Locksley," said Prince John to the bold yeoman, with a bitter smile, "wilt thou try conclusions with Hubert, or wilt thou yield up bow, baldrick, and quiver to the Provost of the sports ?"

"Sith it be no better," said Locksley, "I am content to try my fortune ; on condition that when I have shot two shafts at yonder mark of Hubert's, he shall be bound to shoot one at that which I shall propose."

"That is but fair," answered Prince John, "and it shall not be refused thee.—If thou dost beat this braggart, Hubert, I will fill the bugle with silver pennies for thee."

"A man can do but his best," answered Hubert ; "but my grandsire drew a good long-bow at Hastings, and I trust not to dishonour his memory."

The former target was now removed, and a fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation, long measuring the distance with his eye, while he held in his hand his bended bow, with the arrow placed on the string. At length he made a step forward, and raising the bow at the full stretch of his left arm, till the centre or grasping-place was

nigh level with his face, he drew his bowstring to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air, and lighted within the inner ring of the target, but not exactly in the centre.

"You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert," said his antagonist, bending his bow, "or that had been a better shot."

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stepped to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was speaking almost at the instant that the shaft left the bowstring, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

"By the light of heaven!" said Prince John to Hubert, "an thou suffer that runagate knave to overcome thee, thou art worthy of the gallows!"

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions. "An your highness were to hang me," he said, "a man can but do his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow——"

"The foul fiend on thy grandsire and all his generation!" interrupted John; "shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be the worse for thee!"

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and not neglecting the caution which he had received from his adversary, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind, which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrow alighted in the very centre of the target.

"A Hubert! a Hubert!" shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. "In the clout!—in the clout!—a Hubert for ever!"

"Thou canst not mend that shot, Locksley," said the Prince, with an insulting smile.

"I will notch his shaft for him, however," replied Locksley.

And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity, that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamour. "This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood," whispered the yeomen to each other; "such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain."

"And now," said Locksley, "I will crave your Grace's permission to plant such a mark as is used in the North Country; and welcome every brave yeoman who shall try a shot at it to win a smile from the bonny lass he loves best."

He then turned to leave the lists. "Let your guards attend me," he said, "if you please; I go but to cut a rod from the next willow-bush."

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape; but the cry of "Shame! shame!" which burst from the multitude, induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man's thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing at the same time that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used, was to put shame upon his skill. "For his own part," he said, "and in the land where he was bred, men would as soon take for their mark King Arthur's round table, which held sixty knights around it. A child of seven years old," he said, "might hit yonder target with a headless shaft; but," added he, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, "he that hits that rod at five-score yards, I call him an archer fit to bear both bow and quiver before a king, an it were the stout King Richard himself."

“ My grandsire,” said Hubert, “ drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life, and neither will I. If this yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the bucklers—or rather, I yield to the devil that is in his jerkin, and not to any human skill ; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss. I might as well shoot at the edge of our parson’s whittle, or at a wheat straw, or at a sunbeam, as at a twinkling white streak which I can hardly see.”

“ Cowardly dog ! ” said Prince John.—“ Sirrah Locksley, do thou shoot ; but if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man ever did so. Howe’er it be, thou shalt not crow over us with a mere show of superior skill.”

“ I will do my best, as Hubert says,” answered Locksley ; “ no man can do more.”

So saying, he again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string, which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a little frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberation, and the multitude awaited the event in breathless silence. The archer vindicated their opinion of his skill—his arrow split the willow rod against which it was aimed. A jubilee of acclamations followed ; and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley’s skill, lost for an instant his dislike to his person. “ These twenty nobles,” he said, “ which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own ; we will make them fifty, if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our bodyguard, and be near to our person. For never did so strong a hand bend a bow, or so true an eye direct a shaft.”

“ Pardon me, noble Prince,” said Locksley ; “ but I have vowed, that if ever I take service, it should be with your royal brother, King Richard. These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow

as his grandsire did at Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial, he would have hit the wand as well as I."

Hubert shook his head as he received with reluctance the bounty of the stranger, and Locksley, anxious to escape further observation, mixed with the crowd, and was seen no more.

From "Ivanhoe"

A POET OF THE PEASANT REVOLT

J. C. ANDREWS

THIRTEEN hundred and eighty-one! Nearly two hundred years on!

During this time the power of the king was limited by the action of the great nobles. There were wars with Scotland and with France. Bannockburn, Crécy, and Poitiers were fought, and the Black Death swept over Europe and devastated England. The scarcity of labour caused wages to rise, and in reply the lords of the manors pressed hardly on the people. The discontent of the peasants grew until, under the influence of agitators like John Ball, it produced a serious rebellion from Yorkshire to Hants.

This story tells you what happened in Kent.

For three years Piers dwelt upon the road that leads to St Thomas' shrine, and often he would lag behind his flock upon the road to speak with ragged way-side folk. There churls waited, sometimes for days, until he passed. They would ask him how the plough went, or, stopping to beg an alms of the burly host, would draw a rude plough in the dust of the road, idly, with their staves. To such he would pass strange messages which he had received in stranger manner. . . . Then also Piers began to hear, everywhere he went, songs of his own making in the mouths of the common people. Rude songs they

were about millers and ploughmen, ditchers and delvers, songs that recalled how there were no overbearing gentlefolk in Eden, where labour fell evenly and all were happy. Some of the city folk were inclined to quote the laboured head-rhymes¹ of a West-countryman—Long Will, who lived on the land—who, falling asleep one morning on Malvern Hills when soft was the sun, had dreamed strange dreams, dreams wherein the poor ploughman, rebuking the lust of courts, and overcoming pride and falsehood, lived at peace on the fruits of honest toil. Yet the churls mostly jingled the easy end-rhymes of Piers in their heads, and he, when he heard their songs droning across the twilit fields at even, would pat himself on the back for a poet and a great man.

Year by year his greatness grew, and the simple folk, who hired him to take them from Southwark to the feet of St Thomas, never guessed that in his fat hands lay the threads of conspiracy, and behind his beery eyes the rhymes were growing which would fire the countryside.

In the spring of '81 the old rogue, with his usual covey—rather meagre perhaps—for, in those years, times were hard for the lesser landholders, had reached as far down the road as Faversham, when he received news that set him hard a-thinking. In those days there dwelt at the turning of the path that leads to Ospringe, a hermit who stood in rags beside his faggot tabernacle, stretching forth a greasy crumb-bowl to ask an alms of passing pilgrims. The gift of prophecy was his, as folk said, but Piers knew the mean tricks of the old road too well to give much heed to this side-show. He knew the monotonous sing-song of old, and he knew, too, the singer, both for hermit and agitator. But behold what sort of prophecy the holy man spoke!

¹ Alliteration, as used in Middle English verse, is head-rhyme. Our modern rhyme is end-rhyme.

"And as I lay sleeping I saw a ball, a ball of fire. It lay at a church door, and the folk who served the church, fat clerks, spurned it with their feet, so that it rolled from them. And in my dream, behold it rolled upon the road to London-town, and the ball gat a voice and spake. Then behold that ball grew greater, darting hither and yon, and the voice grew loud like to many trumpets.

"But behold again in my dream a crowd, a great multitude of bending folk, and upon them the ball rolled, darting forth sparks of fire which fell upon the mouths of them that were bowed, and the voice cried, saying thus, 'Lo, ye that are bowed, now stand ye upright.'

"But they that were bowed made answer, 'Nay, we cannot, for the load is heavy which bows us.'

"And the voice replied, 'Yea, because of the sparks of fire ye may.'

"So the people made answer with one accord, 'Show us how, and when, and we shall stand upright.'

"And the voice said, 'Now!''

This last word the hermit spoke with a frenzied intensity, looking full at Piers, who looked back at him with good-humoured scorn, and asked, "Where is this ball, Goodman?"

"In the valley over yon hill," replied the hermit. "Look that thou find him."

Piers dropped a silver penny in the hermit's bowl, and therewith a scrap of paper scrawled with the names of many manors. His people also added their alms to the heap, and cantered on, but Piers was silent and thoughtful as they took the road. You may hunt with the hounds and run with the deer for a time, but you must be on one side or t'other at the death.

The next day was Sunday, and they lay at the Inn of Boughton-under-Blee, where Piers got word of an old friend. As he and his convoy came from church they saw beneath an aged yew a lean and hungry churl. He was

speaking to the villein folk, and they answered, at first with sullen growls, then with deep oaths and wild snatches of familiar song that made Piers' bosom swell. "Ah, ye good people, things go not well to pass in England nor shall do till everything be common ; so saith John Trewman." A howl of assent followed, and the reeve of Heron Hill passed out to the road with the parish priest, nose in air.

"Till there be neither villein nor gentlefolk." The speaker swept a hand backward over the graves, "Earl's bones, churl's bones ! What difference ; all are equal here."

"As when Adam delved," shouted a pinched and haggard ploughman.

"Aye so," cried the stranger. "Let us go to the King and show him what servage we be in," and the whole crowd with one accord yelled "Aye !"

The host met the strange churl in the parlour of the inn that night, and he was in great heart. He looked long on Piers, then spoke. "John Trewman has sent me to seek a messenger," he said, drawing, with a forefinger dipped in spilled beer, the rough outline of a plough upon the bench.

"Hush," said Piers, looking warily round, and then, "Where is John Trewman, fellow ? And by what sign may I know that thou comest from him ?"

"John lies to-day in Maidstone gaol," replied the churl, "and he bade me seek one who walked in the soft places of the road."

"That is I, indeed," quoth Piers. "What lacks John Ball of me ?"

"A letter, sir ; he would have you write him a letter, and a song to send into the shires."

Piers pulled from his scrip a paper, an ink-horn, and a broken quill, which he set himself to sharpening. He had recourse as many times to the brown jug beside him

as to the black horn in his hand, and at last produced the following effort :

John Skep, sometimes St Mary Priest at York and now of Colchester, greets well John Nameless and John Miller and John Carter, and he bids them that they beware of guile in borough, and stand together in God's name and bid Piers Ploughman beat well Hob the Robber ["That's a shaft for old Bob Hales' ribs," thought Piers], and take with you John Trewman and all his fellows and no one else.

Here the scribe broke into verse :

John the miller hath yground, small, small, small ;
The Kingis Son of Heaven, He shall pay for all.
Be ye ware or ye be woe
Know your friende from your foe,
Seek enough but ask no moe.
Do well and better and flee from sin
And seek ye peace and hold therein ;
So bids John Trewman and all his fellows.

Piers read it over to himself with much content while it was a-drying, then, "Take that to John Ball," he said, below his breath, for this was a hazardous trade to drive in an inn parlour.

"Nay," said the churl, "I go Canterburyward ; there is another who takes your letter to Father John at Maidstone."

Piers winced ; he wondered if the black-haired priest at Maidstone suspected him of treason. But the messenger continued, "In a day or two we go to London to the King, and half this shire shall march behind us, you and me."

"Hist !" cried Piers angrily, but the churl scorned caution. "What does it matter if folk know you for the——"

"Out, fool," shouted the host. "I have sheep to shear. Let me take my flock to Canterbury and thou shalt call me what thou wilt."

The man was silent for a space, looking upon his fellow rebel. At last he said slowly, "Friend Piers, John Ball, when I went from him, bade me tell you this, if I thought you had need of it. 'Tell him,' quoth he to me, quoth he, 'Tell him how churl folk in French lands taught those who kept not faith with 'em.' "

"Well," said Piers.

"They roasted 'em, friend, roasted 'em alive."

"What is thy name," said Piers slowly.

"I am a churl of Erith," replied the man, "and by name Abel Cur; Father John named me the good watchdog," and he laughed nastily.

"Well, Abel!" said Piers, with wide-open innocent eyes, "if the Jackery in France roasted traitors, I ask no better fate if I break faith"; and there and then he resolved to post speedily back from Canterbury and carry his mean tale to the King's throne.

Piers had much to think on as he got his company upon the road next day. Now was the very time to join the nobles. He could tell that much was known, for many liveried messengers were speeding up and down the road that journey. They had passed one at Meopham by the roadside, bruised and bleeding, without his letter scrip, and with a ragged patch on his coat where the talbot sejant¹ of Sudbury was wont to blaze. The lords knew much, but they did not know what Piers knew, and, could he win to London, wealth for the rest of his life was his—and ten thousand villein folk might hang. He must beg, or steal, the swiftest horse in Canterbury, and post back hot to the capital.

As, on Monday morning, he was getting into the saddle before the inn door, with his pilgrims already on the road, the ostler spoke to him.

"A churl, who was here yesternight, bade me tell you there would be a great game of ball in the market-place of

¹ A sitting hound, Sudbury's family crest.

Canterbury. 'Twere pity of your life that you should miss it."

"I shall be there," quoth Piers from the saddle, but he swore under his breath as he cantered up the foot of Boughton hill.

At Harbledown they tarried long, for though they had confessed before mass at Boughton, and were shriven clean enough to seek the martyr's shrine, yet all were eager to view the relics of the saint in St Nicholas church, and it was growing dusk when they descended Summer hill, and the white towers of Sudbury's new West gate frowned before them. On their left a faint, fitful glow lit the sky in the direction of St Stephen's, where Sir Robert Hales' hall lay among the trees. As they drew near the gate they could see many folk upon the road. They were churls, and some carried torches. All were singing a wild, rough song, a song that made Piers' pulses beat quicker in his veins, for he had made the words of it.

Inside the gate, which, strangely enough at that hour, was wide, the crowd was denser still. Most of the houses were open, and the burghers were busily meting out good cheer of ale to all who would ask for it, if only they wore churl's dress. Many men were drunk, and the little hill by King's Bridge was almost impassable. The journey-men tanners by the river were marching in a band up and down the bank-side singing the same song that Piers had heard without the gate. The frightened folk of his company huddled behind him, but he brought them safely through to The Chequers at the corner of Mercery Lane. A voice from the crowd cried, as he entered the stone portals of the hostel, "Ready for the roast, my maker of songs?"

He didn't sleep that night, for there were some three thousand folk in the market-place who were not at all sleepy and very little sober. They were eager to

advertise the merits of John, a miller, and Peter, a ploughman, of whom they sang in verse that made Piers' heart leap.

He was up betimes in the morning, and there was much to-doing. Buttermart, outside Christchurch, was a howling mob; Burhgate was a river of yells. At nine o'clock Christchurch gate opened, and a knight, mounted and fully armed, came out and scanned the crowd. For half a minute he stood there motionless, smiling at these villain folk. Somebody threw a torn leather bottle at him which, as he ducked, caught on the leather crest of his helm, spilled and dripped slowly down his silken blazoned upon. He smiled the more broadly and backed his horse inside the monastery gates again. As the matins bell tolled he came out once more; the gates were thrown wide and behind him one might see a file of mounted men-at-arms.

The knight gave them one short word and the troop moved forward. The crowded churls pressed back on one another. The soldiery cleared a little space in Buttermart; then three rode forward down Mercery Lane, breaking up the wedge of churls that crowded the narrow alley. As they were half-way through to the street the knight shouted, "Way, sirs! Way for the Princess!" and a gilded wagon, which quartered on its blazoned sides the lilies and the lioncels, came through the gate at a canter. Six horses were harnessed to it, and each bore a rider, while in front and behind trotted a little company of mounted men. They took Mercery Lane at a canter, and swung into the street in a heavy gallop, making toward West gate in a cloud of dust. Many of the folk jeered, and some threw turfs at the gaudy car, behind whose painted sides the young King's mother sat among her maidens, daring the sixty miles of rebel road that kept her from the side of her son. The dusty car was to pull up its sweated horses outside London gate before mid-

night, for, despite the perils of the road, the princess got through, and lodged that night within the Tower.

Not so with Piers, however ; he got his horse by the simple means of taking him out of the palace stables, for when Christ-church gate was opened, it was never closed again. The churls surged in and filled the public cloister, their leaders whipping them on with the cry, " Let's find Sudbury, fellows, and have his treasure ! "

The holiness of the minster kept them from the heap of offerings before St Thomas' shrine, though they shouted through the choir screen to the frightened monks at matins, " Get ready, friends, to choose a new archbishop," and they passed on with drunken laughter to the sack of Simon's palace. Simon, well for him, was in London, so they found him not ; nor did they lay hands on treasure, for none was there. But they came out with mighty store of loot, and Piers, who entered afoot, returned upon a horse of mettle.

There was no time to lose then ; he made for King's bridge on the way to West gate. A crowd at Black-friar's gate brought him to a stand. " Where away ? " asked an armed churl, with a two-tailed cap, who placed a hand upon his bridle. Piers pointed ahead, " To fetch up folk from Blean and Denstroud, friend."

" No friend, sir ; thou art over-dressed to be friend to churl-folk, over-dressed and over-mounted. What's in yon scrip ? "

Piers hung on to his leather purse. " Nought," he answered shortly, and moved his horse on. The churls, however, would not be shaken off ; a dozen were round him now. " Try now if he be one of our folk," cried one ; " sing us the churls' song."

" Sing you the churls' song," roared Piers, blind drunk with the pride of authorship. " Why, fellows, I *made* it," and, standing in his stirrups, he raised a mighty baritone.

“ My lord he lives in hall, and drinks whatever wine he please,
 My lady lies in her solère ¹ to give her better ease,
 The reeve sits snug in buttery and marks our tallies down,
 But we be only villein folk who till the fallows brown.”

The first line was a solo, the second a gathering refrain, the rest rose in a mighty roar that shook the tower of St Peter's, hard by ; but the poet's vanity had bound him, heart and soul, to the cause of his blood-brothers. At that moment a short, angry fellow with red hair rode down the street at the head of a mob ; Abel Cur was at his side.

“ Ah, Piers,” quoth John Ball's messenger, with a dry grin, “ take care that horse runs not away with thee. The torches will be out to-night.”

But the red-headed man, whom men called Wat, asked of him, “ For whom are you ? ”

And Piers, doffing his cap, replied, “ Sir, I am for the King, and the noble commons of England.”

At this all the folk raised a great shout of “ The King and the noble commons ! ” cheering, and crying it again, and breaking into the churls' song so that it became their battle-cry, and the crowd made to go back to Buttermart again. Here they had the mayor and council out before them to swear loyalty to the great cry which Piers had made : “ The King and the noble commons of England ! ”

“ Now,” says red-headed Wat to the mayor when he had sworn, “ have ye any traitors to that cause ? ” At that the tanners made a great outcry, shouting the name of one of their masters who was known for a hard man.

“ Out with him ! ” cried Wat, “ we will see justice done.” They dragged the wretched burgher into the clear space before Christchurch gate, and had his head off with shouts and laughter.

Abel cried into Piers' ear as the blow fell, “ A short way with such folk ; eh, Master Poet ? ”

¹ Retiring room adjacent to the hall for the use of ladies of the manor.

But Piers now was surrounded with a stalwart band of fellows, captivated by his jests, and all assured that he was a good fellow.

"Who is he?" he had asked his disciples coming up High Street, as the red-headed leader rode before him.

"He's a good fellow," they cried. "Kiss him, Piers, he hath slain a tax-gatherer."

Piers urged his horse level and kissed the tyler on both cheeks, while the rebel peasants howled and danced about them, throwing back and forth from band to band the old rogue's battle-cry.

That night they set out for Maidstone, and, used as Piers was to the road, he had never made a journey in that guise before. His stalwarts marched around him, singing his songs, throwing coarse jests to and fro among them, and handing him, whenever they passed an inn, some looted bottle of Bordeaux or Oseye. At cross-roads smoke-grimed crowds joined them, and often on spiked poles they bore the heads of reeves, raw or roasted, as fancy bade. Piers received these with grave courtesy; his councillors he called them, and at Ashford he held a council of ten. 'Twas merry to see the fat rogue offer wine to the scorched and bleeding death-masks. The churls laughed heartily. Abel Cur, behind with the main body, laughed too, but none knew his thoughts.

The black priest, fresh from prison, waited them at Maidstone, but they did not tarry there, for the country had been harried by other bands before them, and they lay at Rochester that night.

A great band joined them there, triumphant with the fall of the castle and bearing its captain a prisoner among them, and they passed over Gad's Hill to Gravesend.

Here was the rumour that London was easier to enter from the other bank. In a great riot of swearing and song the folk made up their minds; some crossed into Essex, a great part stayed in Kent, while a hundred or so tarried

between, as is not unnatural when drunken churls crowd into ferry-boats and dance in mid-stream.

Piers, however, and the leaders, did not make that journey. Essex he knew not, while every inn on the great south road was his familiar haunt ; and thus, halting at times to kill a lawyer or burn the tax-rolls of a manor . . . they came to Blackheath. That night they rested, or rather lay round their fires singing their songs and quarrelling, as they watched the twinkle of their companions' fires on Stebonheath, and round about Ald gate. They were early next morning in council, for it had taken them little time to find that London Bridge was closed to them, and Piers, who had a great idea in his brain, showed them what to do.

He had slept little that night for, when the wine had died out of him and the shouting ceased, that old need for gold and ease gnawed at his vitals, and he schemed to get to the King, and buy a pension with the heads of these silly ploughmen. Wat and Father John were already deep in talk, and there were two or three burghers also of their company, listening with grave faces.

" Good morrow to the noble commons of England," cried the host as he swung jauntily into the circle ; and every eye brightened, for the tyler was powerless and angry, digging his sword fiercely into the soil, while Father John was plainly troubled.

" What to do ? " they asked of Piers. " London gate is closed and we cannot force it. What may we do, good man ? "

Piers looked around his circle. " For whom do we stand ? " he asked.

Ball bit his lips as a townsman made reply : " As you said yesterday, sir ; for the King, and the noble commons of England."

" Aye, my masters, and where is the King ? "

They pointed to the white shadow of the Tower across the river.

"Well, then, let's go and speak with him," Piers went on.

"We can't all go," they said.

"Better, then," said the old rogue gaily, "I will go and ask him to cross and speak with you."

"Aye," they shouted, "let it be so"; but John Ball turned aside and spoke a prayer that does not come into any breviary.

"Sirs," he said, "that were not wise, for if the lord King wills not to treat with us, then might he cast our fellow into prison, and we should lose our songster, which were great pity," he smiled dryly. "Yet behold, we have with us that knight, Sir John Newtown, whom we took at Rochester, and his children also; let us send him, for the lord King will speak with him, and if he come not back, we may slay his children."

This way was plainly the best, and the folk assented, so Piers heard the bolt shot on another way out.

Sir John went and came back to carry the King's assent. He would come by water and speak to them at the river-side, and the folk tightened their belts and lay down hungry but thankful, for when the lord King heard their tale surely he would give them succour.

But Piers was feeling like a man in prison. He had given all his heart to the folk who had sung his songs outside Black-friar's gate, Canterbury, but he was a generous creature, and, with the toil of the road and sweat of his companions, he would now have given all his heart to anyone who could find him soft lying for the rest of his life. The King could grant him that, truly, but Ball was far too careful a guard to give Piers the chance of turning traitor. It troubled the worthy host. Could he but look into the future! . . .

He slept but little that night, though from dawn he went off into a stupor that nothing could disturb. When he awoke the sun was high, and his dead camp-fire deserted, though a great tumult not far off assured him

that his fellow-rebels were nigh. He got up and saw upon the crest of a hill his old companion Ball surrounded by a huge mob of rebels. Piers approached this crowd and stood upon the fringe listening, but he was far too distant to get any word of Father John's sermon. He had been there but a very little while when a company of men came running from the river, crying, "The lord King, sirs; he comes to speak with us," and the mob, breaking up in disorder, ran down toward the river. Piers was too fat, and too short-winded, in that chase. He reached bank-side in time to see the King's barge pull out across stream, and to hear his rebel friends complain, as they came sadly back, "Simon and Hob, the Robber, were there; they would not let the King come ashore."

The rebel folk were now in no patient mood, and ready for any mischief, so that when one cried, "Let us force the bridge, fellows, there are men the other side to help us," the suggestion met with a great response. Piers was unused to the rough lying which the last few days had brought him, and lay down to sleep again; but about noon he woke, and seeing how all the camp was moving westward toward Southwark, he got up and followed. As he rounded the corner of his old haunt, The Tabard, he saw that the drawbridge was down, and, with a stream of other folk, he passed through London gate into the city. It was a full day since he, and those with him, had tasted food, but there was plenty to be had in London streets, and many a churl who had ridden in Piers' company from Canterbury offered him meat and wine as he passed the cooks' shops in Watling Street.

Yet he had hardly time to satisfy his hunger before a fresh noise and bustle arose in the street. A cry, growing ever and ever more insistent, broke upon the ears of the feasters; first a murmur, then a hoarse roar, lastly a shout growing louder and fiercer momentarily: "To the Savoy! To the Savoy!"

The old rogue and his fellows dropped their jugs and hurried into the street. Every churl and all the scum of London were hurrying westward. Out they went by Lud gate, and up Fleet Street, till they came to John of Gaunt's huge new palace in the Strand. When Piers and his party arrived he found John Ball addressing the mob from a window over the doorway in the great quadrangle.

"Fellows," he was saying, "we come to chastise robbers, and not to rob. Break and burn, break and burn ! but he who thieves, let us serve him as we shall serve that robber, Sudbury !"

The churls waited no second bidding. Every room they ran through, lugging great bedsteads into the hall, and dropping them over the galleries, rending fair tapestries, and rich linen, tearing the damascened armour from the walls, and crashing it upon the heap in the hall. With shouts of triumph they brought out the manor-rolls from the office, and added them to the heap, crowning it with the royal duke's gorgeous plate of silver and gold.

Lastly Wat stepped forward with a torch and fired the heap, while the mob made haste to escape. A churl, mad with the lust of pillage, shouted, as he and Piers went out through the great door, "Would we had Gaunt John here to crown the pile," and Piers, picking up from the floor a leather blazoned jack covered with the quarterings of Lancaster, replied, "We'll e'en let this serve for him." He set up the jack upon a pike-staff in the courtyard and the men aimed at it, till it was stuck like a hedgehog with cloth-yard shafts, and the fire blazed before them, and the timbers cracked, and the roof fell in. Then they turned their backs upon the smoking ruins and made for the Temple.

What need to chronicle the further pillage that ensued ? Before night the boy King from the Tower could count half a dozen flaming houses about him, and, on Tower Hill, 60,000 churls encamped, and told how they would

serve Sudbury and Hales, when once they got inside those grey walls. At Temple-bar a bonfire of tax-rolls still flickered, and dead Flemings, and Frenchmen, lay about the streets.

Piers slept that night, tired out and half drunk, on St Catherine's wharf. He had been till a late hour in council at the house of a London rebel, Tom Farringdon. Tyler and Ball were there with Cur and Straw, Horne and Sibley of the common council of the city, and their work was to say which of their enemies should die. Is there any need for me to give you their list? Except for Simon, and Hob, the Robber, Piers had forgotten them, when he lay down by bank-side to sleep. The dawn broke, bright and blue, and Piers awoke, rubbing his eyes, and yawning. Few churls were yet awake, for yesterday's work had been strenuous, but a common woman was leaning by a mooring-post and looking out upon the misty river. As Piers got to his feet and stretched the dew-fed stiffness from his limbs, she started forward, pointing along the near bank. A small skiff had just passed out of the water-gate. "What's yon boat?" she cried.

Piers watched the boat clear the mists, and saw in the stern a thin and huddled figure. "By the truth of my body," quoth he, "'tis the old rat himself. 'Ware, fellows; Sudbury escapes!"

In a moment the wharf was alive, and a dozen random shafts clove the mist-covered waters. Then the rowers backed, and, amid a low, fierce storm of jeers, the water-gate of the Tower closed its black jaws upon it again. None but the oarsmen heard the old man's whisper, a word he repeated oft-times that day, "It is the hand of God!"

St Catherine's and Tower Hill were soon alive, and envoys went to and fro from King to churl. Soon the word went round that the King would meet all his liege subjects at Mile End, and hear their complaints. At about seven o'clock he came out of the Tower, and rode

through the crowd. The band of noble horsemen about him cried to the churls, bidding them follow. Most of them did, though Wat gave a short order to a chosen band to watch lest Hales and Sudbury should escape.

Piers stayed with those, and they passed the warm morning of Corpus Christi lazily watching the bowmen in the barbican, where the raised portcullis, and the lowered bridge, awaited the King's return. For several days the old rogue had known no such peace and quiet, and he gave himself up to rhyme-making under the blue sky. In half an hour Tom Farringdon came back with a hundred or so of churls—he wasn't going "to sweat to Mile End to be cozened with false promises!" An idle hour passed.

Half-way through the morning Wat rode back, foaming with rage, and at the head of a couple of hundred rebels. "I have spoken with the King," he shouted; "he won't give us these rats." Then he glanced at the lowered drawbridge. "They're inside," he cried; "let's go and find them."

An angry growl responded to these words, and pell-mell they rushed over the bridge and into London's stronghold, the refuge of kings. The startled guard looked on in dismay, "Sirs," cried a bowman, "is the King coming back?" But the rebels only laughed, patting the soldiers' cheeks, and calling them brothers, yet the captain of the gate dared not lower the portcullis lest he shut out his lord.

Once they had gained the inner works the rest was a small matter, though a riotous. Everywhere they went, howling for Sim and Hob. Piers was among their leaders, puffing up and down the stone stairs, and poking his head into the bedrooms of great ladies.

"Give us a kiss," he said to one of them as she shrieked at his appearance, and he knew not that it was the mother of the King. At last he paused for breath outside an

oaken door in White Tower, while his comrades clamoured behind him.

"Hist!" he said.

A voice within was quavering through the phrases of the litany, "*Omnes sancti orate pro nobis.*"

There rose a howl of triumph; they had run their quarry to earth.

Piers and his comrades, with violent hands, dragged the two old clerics forth on to the green. "We've got 'em!" they cried; "we've got 'em!" and the whole mob surged out after them to Tower Hill.

Poor old Simon, in quavering speech, was pleading all the time! "No traitor nor robber of the poor, my sons!" but Hales maintained a grim silence. He knew there was no hope, and thought it well that he had confessed but an hour since.

On Tower Hill the work was short. When the block was brought the howls of the mob hushed, while Jack Starling leaned upon his axe, and Simon uttered one last plea.

"Ah! my loved sons," he quavered, "what would you do? What sin have I done that you should slay me? Beware, lest in slaying me, your archbishop, a just judgment shall befall you. Truly for such a deed England may suffer the pains of the interdict." Here the mob broke in again, swearing that they feared neither interdict nor Pope.

Piers, who had held one of the old man's arms, stood away from him, and the archbishop fell upon his knees before the block, while another ruffian standing by snatched off the mitre and placed it on his own tousled head.

Jack Starling swung up his axe, and brought it down so clumsily that it only severed the muscles of the old man's neck. He put up a shaking hand, heavy with the great seal ring of Canterbury, and touched the wound. "Ah," he groaned once more, "the hand of God!"

And the axe fell again, severing fingers and neck; he spoke no more.

Hales came next with a couple of others, and the rebels

finished the day with a hunt of fat Flemings in Chepeside and a tour of the Tower.

Old Piers lay down to sleep that night, the night of St Basil, under a hawthorn at the top of Tower Hill. But, as he crossed the hill toward dusk, he came upon the block with the bodies still about it. A bruised hand stretched out to him from the tangled mass, and on one finger of it was the great seal of Canterbury. No one was about. He bent down, and wrenched off the ring, then made away over the hill.

When he found the thorn bush, he lay down in the shade to sleep, for the moon was rising very bright and clear, but he must needs take his plunder and admire it on his hand, glittering it in the moonshine. So he fell asleep. Anon came Jack Starling over the hill ; a dagger was slung in front of him and the fouled axe behind. He was drunk, so he saw things which were not. The moon had westered, and Piers' arm lay in the full light, with the glittering ring upon his fore-finger. Starling stopped :

" By the faith o' my body," he said thickly, "'tis old Simon " ; then he laughed. " Me-seemed I did for him this morning."

He laughed again, and unslung his axe unsteadily. The light was good enough to see Piers' form, even in the shadow, and he turned over in his sleep muttering some random rhyme that he had made :

" John the miller hath yground, small, small, small ;
The Kingis Son of Heaven, He shall pay for all."

" The old robber speaks churls' English," said Jack, swinging up his axe with a wild laugh.

This time he did not strike twice.

So Piers had his will at last, for some one in good faith had taken him for a nobleman !

From " Lords' Men of Littlebourne "

THE BATTLE OF SHOREBY

R. L. STEVENSON

HENRY V had won France, Henry VI had lost it, and we now reach that struggle between the two parties of nobles, Yorkists and Lancastrians, which brought about so much misery during the latter half of the fifteenth century. If you read *The Black Arrow* you will find that the people had just cause for grievance too, and that skilful archers were still to be found in England.

VERY early the next morning, before the first peep of the day, Dick arose, changed his garments, armed himself once more like a gentleman, and set forth for Lawless's den in the forest. There, it will be remembered, he had left Lord Foxham's papers ; and to get these and be back in time for the tryst with the young Duke of Gloucester could only be managed by an early start, and the most vigorous walking.

The frost was more rigorous than ever ; the air windless and dry, and stinging to the nostril. The moon had gone down, but the stars were still bright and numerous, and the reflection from the snow was clear and cheerful. There was no need for a lamp to walk by ; nor, in that still but ringing air, the least temptation to delay.

Dick had crossed the greater part of the open ground between Shoreby and the forest, and had reached the bottom of the little hill, some hundred yards below the Cross of St Bride, when, through the stillness of the

black morn, there rang forth the note of a trumpet, so shrill, clear, and piercing, that he thought he had never heard the match of it for audibility. It was blown once, and then hurriedly a second time ; and then the clash of steel succeeded.

At this young Shelton pricked his ears, and, drawing his sword, ran forward up the hill.

Presently he came in sight of the cross, and was aware of a most fierce encounter raging on the road before it. There were seven or eight assailants, and but one to keep head against them ; but so active and dexterous was this one, so desperately did he charge and scatter his opponents, so deftly keep his footing on the ice, that already, before Dick could intervene, he had slain one, wounded another, and kept the whole in check.

Still, it was by a miracle that he continued his defence, and at any moment, any accident, the least slip of foot or error of hand, his life would be a forfeit.

“ Hold ye well, sir ! Here is help ! ” cried Richard ; and forgetting that he was alone, and that the cry was somewhat irregular, “ To the Arrow ! to the Arrow ! ” he shouted, as he fell upon the rear of the assailants.

These were stout fellows also, for they gave not an inch at this surprise, but faced about, and fell with astonishing fury upon Dick. Four against one, the steel flashed about him in the starlight ; the sparks flew fiercely ; one of the men opposed to him fell—in the stir of the fight he hardly knew why ; then he himself was struck across the head, and though the steel cap below his hood protected him, the blow beat him down upon one knee, with a brain whirling like a windmill sail.

Meanwhile the man whom he had come to rescue, instead of joining in the conflict, had, on the first sign of intervention, leaped back and blown again, and yet more urgently and loudly, on that same shrill-voiced trumpet that began the alarm. Next moment, indeed, his foes

were on him, and he was once more charging and fleeing, leaping, stabbing, dropping to his knees, and using indifferently sword and dagger, foot and hand, with the same unshaken courage and feverish energy and speed.

But that ear-piercing summons had been heard at last. There was a muffled rushing in the snow ; and in a good hour for Dick, who saw the sword-points glitter already at his throat, there poured forth out of the wood upon both sides a disorderly torrent of mounted men-at-arms, each cased in iron, and with visor lowered, each bearing his lance in rest, or his sword bared and raised, and each carrying, so to speak, a passenger, in the shape of an archer or page, who leaped one after another from their perches, and had presently doubled the array.

The original assailants, seeing themselves outnumbered and surrounded, threw down their arms without a word.

"Seize me these fellows !" said the hero of the trumpet ; and when his order had been obeyed, he drew near to Dick and looked him in the face.

Dick, returning this scrutiny, was surprised to find in one who had displayed such strength, skill, and energy, a lad no older than himself—slightly deformed, with one shoulder higher than the other, and of a pale, painful, and distorted countenance.¹ The eyes, however, were very clear and bold.

"Sir," said this lad, "ye came in good time for me, and none too early."

"My lord," returned Dick, with a faint sense that he was in the presence of a great personage, "ye are yourself so marvellous a good swordsman that I believe ye had managed them single-handed. Howbeit, it was certainly well for me that your men delayed no longer than they did."

"How knew ye who I was ?" demanded the stranger.

¹ Richard Crookback would have been really far younger at this date.

"Even now, my lord," Dick answered, "I am ignorant of whom I speak with."

"Is it so?" asked the other. "And yet ye threw yourself head first into this unequal battle."

"I saw one man valiantly contending against many," replied Dick, "and I had thought myself dishonoured not to bear him aid."

A singular sneer played about the young nobleman's mouth as he made answer:

"These are very brave words. But to the more essential—are ye Lancaster or York?"

"My lord, I make no secret; I am clear for York," Dick answered.

"By the mass!" replied the other, "it is well for you."

And so saying he turned towards one of his followers.

"Let me see," he continued in the same sneering and cruel tones—"let me see a clean end of these brave gentlemen. Truss me them up."

There were but five survivors of the attacking party. Archers seized them by the arms; they were hurried to the borders of the wood, and each placed below a tree of suitable dimensions; the rope was adjusted; an archer, carrying the end of it, hastily clambered overhead, and before a minute was over, and without a word passing upon either hand, the five men were swinging by the neck.

"And now," cried the deformed leader, "back to your posts, and when I summon you next, be readier to attend."

"My lord duke," said one man, "beseech you, tarry not here alone. Keep but a handful of lances at your hand."

"Fellow," said the duke, "I have forborne to chide you for your slowness. Cross me not, therefore. I trust my hand and arm, for all that I be crooked. Ye were backward when the trumpet sounded: and ye are now too forward with your counsels. But it is ever so; last with the lance and first with tongue. Let it be reversed."

And with a gesture that was not without a sort of dangerous nobility, he waved them off.

The footmen climbed again to their seats behind the men-at-arms, and the whole party moved slowly away and disappeared in twenty different directions, under the cover of the forest.

The day was by this time beginning to break, and the stars to fade. The first grey glimmer of dawn shone upon the countenances of the two young men, who now turned once more to face each other.

"Here," said the duke, "ye have seen my vengeance, which is, like my blade, both sharp and ready. But I would not have you, for all Christendom, suppose me thankless. You that came to my aid with a good sword and a better courage—unless that ye recoil from my misshapeness—come to my heart."

And so saying, the young leader held out his arms for an embrace.

In the bottom of his heart Dick already entertained a great terror and some hatred for the man whom he had rescued; but the invitation was so worded that it would not have been merely discourteous, but cruel, to refuse or hesitate, and he hastened to comply.

"And now, my lord duke," he said, when he had regained his freedom, "do I suppose aright? Are ye my Lord Duke of Gloucester?"

"I am Richard of Gloucester," returned the other. "And you—how call they you?"

Dick told him his name, and presented Lord Foxham's signet, which the duke immediately recognized.

"Ye come too soon," he said; "but why should I complain? Ye are like me, that was here at watch two hours before the day. But this is the first sally of mine arms; upon this adventure, Master Shelton, shall I make or mar the quality of my renown. There lie mine enemies, under two old, skilled captains, Risingham and Brackley,

well posted for strength, I do believe, but yet upon two sides without retreat, enclosed betwixt the sea, the harbour, and the river. Methinks, Shelton, here were a great blow to be stricken, an we could strike it silently and suddenly."

"I do think so, indeed," cried Dick, warming.

"Have ye my Lord Foxham's notes?" inquired the duke.

And then Dick, having explained how he was without them for the moment, made himself bold to offer information, every jot as good, of his own knowledge.

"And for mine own part, my lord duke," he added, "an ye had men enough, I would fall on even at this present. For, look ye, at the peep of day the watches of the night are over; but by day they keep neither watch nor ward—only scour the outskirts with horsemen. Now, then, when the night-watch is already unarmed, and the rest are at their morning cup—now were the time to break them."

"How many do ye count?" asked Gloucester.

"They number not two thousand," Dick replied.

"I have seven hundred in the woods behind us," said the duke; "seven hundred follow from Kettley, and will be here anon; behind these, and farther, are four hundred more; and my Lord Foxham hath five hundred half a day from here at Holywood. Shall we attend their coming, or fall on?"

"My lord," said Dick, "when ye hanged these five poor rogues ye did decide the question. Churls although they were, in these uneasy times they will be lacked and looked for, and the alarm be given. Therefore, my lord, if ye do count upon the advantage of a surprise, ye have not, in my poor opinion, one whole hour in front of you."

"I do think so indeed," returned Crookback. "Well, before an hour ye shall be in the thick on't, winning spurs. A swift man to Holywood, carrying Lord Foxham's signet;

another along the road to speed my laggards ! Nay, Shelton, by the rood, it may be done ! ”

Therewith he once more set his trumpet to his lips and blew.

This time he was not long kept waiting. In a moment the open space about the cross was filled with horse and foot. Richard of Gloucester took his place upon the steps, and despatched messenger after messenger to hasten the concentration of the seven hundred men that lay hidden in the immediate neighbourhood among the woods ; and before a quarter of an hour had passed, all his dispositions being taken, he put himself at their head, and began to move down the hill towards Shoreby.

His plan was simple. He was to seize a quarter of the town of Shoreby lying on the right hand of the high-road, and make his position good there in the narrow lanes until his reinforcements followed.

If Lord Risingham chose to retreat, Richard would follow upon his rear, and take him between two fires ; or, if he preferred to hold the town, he would be shut in a trap, there to be gradually overwhelmed by force of numbers.

There was but one danger, but that was imminent and great—Gloucester’s seven hundred might be rolled up and cut to pieces in the first encounter, and, to avoid this, it was needful to make the surprise of their arrival as complete as possible.

The footmen, therefore, were all once more taken up behind the riders, and Dick had the signal honour meted out to him of mounting behind Gloucester himself. For as far as there was any cover the troops moved slowly, and when they came near the end of the trees that lined the highway, stopped to breathe and reconnoitre.

The sun was now well up, shining with a frosty brightness out of a yellow halo ; and right over against the luminary, Shoreby, a field of snowy roofs and ruddy gables, was rolling up its columns of morning smoke.

Gloucester turned round to Dick.

"In that poor place," he said, "where people are cooking breakfast, either you shall gain your spurs and I begin a life of mighty honour and glory in the world's eye, or both of us, as I conceive it, shall fall dead and be unheard of. Two Richards are we. Well then, Richard Shelton, they shall be heard about, these two! Their swords shall not ring more loudly on men's helmets than their names shall ring in people's ears."

Dick was astonished at so great a hunger after fame expressed with so great vehemence of voice and language; and he answered very sensibly and quietly that, for his part, he promised he would do his duty, and doubted not of victory if every one did the like.

By this time the horses were well breathed, and, the leader holding up his sword and giving rein, the whole troop of chargers broke into the gallop and thundered, with their double load of fighting men, down the remainder of the hill and across the snow-covered plain that still divided them from Shoreby.

The whole distance to be crossed was not above a quarter of a mile. But they had no sooner debouched beyond the cover of the trees than they were aware of people fleeing and screaming in the snowy meadows upon either hand. Almost at the same moment a great rumour began to arise, and spread and grow continually louder in the town; and they were not yet half-way to the nearest house before the bells began to ring backward from the steeple.

The young duke ground his teeth together. By these so early signals of alarm he feared to find his enemies prepared; and if he failed to gain a footing in the town, he knew that his small party would soon be broken and exterminated in the open.

In the town, however, the Lancastrians were far from being in so good a posture. It was as Dick had said. The

night-guard had already doffed their harness ; the rest were still hanging—unlatched, unbraced, all unprepared for battle—about their quarters ; and in the whole of Shoreby there were not, perhaps, fifty men full armed, or fifty chargers ready to be mounted.

The beating of the bells, the terrifying summons of men who ran about the streets crying and beating upon the doors, aroused in an incredibly short space at least two score out of that half hundred. These got speedily to horse, and, the alarm still flying wild and contrary, galloped in different directions.

Thus it befell that, when Richard of Gloucester reached the first house of Shoreby, he was met in the mouth of the street by a mere handful of lances, whom he swept before his onset as the storm chases the bark.

A hundred paces into the town, Dick Shelton touched the duke's arm ; the duke, in answer, gathered his reins, put the shrill trumpet to his mouth, and blowing a concerted point, turned to the right hand out of the direct advance. Swerving like a single rider, his whole command turned after him, and, still at the full gallop of the chargers, swept up the narrow by-street. Only the last score of riders drew rein and faced about in the entrance ; the footmen, whom they carried behind them, leapt at the same instant to the earth, and began, some to bend their bows, and others to break into and secure the houses upon either hand.

Surprised at this sudden change of direction, and daunted by the firm front of the rear-guard, the few Lancastrians, after a momentary consultation, turned and rode farther into town to seek for reinforcements.

The quarter of the town upon which, by the advice of Dick, Richard of Gloucester had now seized, consisted of five small streets of poor and ill-inhabited houses, occupying a very gentle eminence, and lying open towards the back.

The five streets being each secured by a good guard, the reserve would thus occupy the centre, out of shot, and yet ready to carry aid wherever it was needed.

Such was the poorness of the neighbourhood that none of the Lancastrian lords, and but few of their retainers, had been lodged therein ; and the inhabitants, with one accord, deserted their houses and fled, squalling, along the streets or over garden walls.

In the centre, where the five ways all met, a somewhat ill-favoured alehouse displayed the sign of the Chequers ; and here the Duke of Gloucester chose his headquarters for the day.

To Dick he assigned the guard of one of the five streets.

“ Go,” he said, “ win your spurs. Win glory for me ; one Richard for another. I tell you, if I rise, ye shall rise by the same ladder. Go,” he added, shaking him by the hand.

But, as soon as Dick was gone, he turned to a little shabby archer at his elbow.

“ Go, Dutton, and that right speedily,” he added. “ Follow that lad. If ye find him faithful, ye answer for his safety, a head for a head. Woe unto you, if ye return without him ! But if he be faithless—or, for one instant, ye misdoubt him—stab him from behind.”

In the meanwhile Dick hastened to secure his post. The street he had to guard was very narrow, and closely lined with houses, which projected and overhung the roadway ; but narrow and dark as it was, since it opened upon the market-place of the town, the main issue of the battle would probably fall to be decided on that spot.

The market-place was full of townspeople fleeing in disorder ; but there was as yet no sign of any foeman ready to attack, and Dick judged he had some time before him to make ready his defence.

The two houses at the end stood deserted, with open doors, as the inhabitants had left them in their flight, and

from these he had the furniture hastily tossed forth and piled into a barrier in the entry of the lane. A hundred men were placed at his disposal, and of these he threw the more part into the houses, where they might lie in shelter and deliver their arrows from the windows. With the rest, under his own immediate eye, he lined the barricade.

Meanwhile the utmost uproar and confusion had continued to prevail throughout the town ; and what with the hurried clashing of bells, the sounding of trumpets, the swift movement of bodies of horse, the cries of the commanders, and the shrieks of women, the noise was almost deafening to the ear. Presently, little by little, the tumult began to subside ; and soon after, files of men in armour and bodies of archers began to assemble and form in line of battle in the market-place.

A large portion of this body were in murrey and blue, and in the mounted knight who ordered their array Dick recognized Sir Daniel Brackley.

Then there befell a long pause, which was followed by the almost simultaneous sounding of four trumpets from four different quarters of the town. A fifth rang in answer from the market-place, and at the same moment the files began to move, and a shower of arrows rattled about the barricade, and sounded like blows upon the walls of the two flanking houses.

The attack had begun, by a common signal, on all the five issues of the quarter. Gloucester was beleaguered upon every side ; and Dick judged, if he would make good his post, he must rely entirely on the hundred men of his command.

Seven volleys of arrows followed one upon the other, and in the very thick of the discharges Dick was touched from behind upon the arm, and found a page holding out to him a leathern jacket, strengthened with bright plates of mail.

"It is from my Lord of Gloucester," said the page. "He hath observed, Sir Richard, that ye went unarmed."

Dick, with a glow at his heart at being so addressed, got to his feet and, with the assistance of the page, donned the defensive coat. Even as he did so, two arrows rattled harmlessly upon the plates, and a third struck down the page, mortally wounded, at his feet.

Meantime the whole body of the enemy had been steadily drawing nearer across the market-place; and by this time were so close at hand that Dick gave the order to return their shot. Immediately, from behind the barrier and from the windows of the houses, a counter-blast of arrows sped, carrying death. But the Lancastrians, as if they had but waited for a signal, shouted loudly in answer, and began to close at a run upon the barrier, the horsemen still hanging back, with visors lowered.

Then followed an obstinate and deadly struggle, hand to hand. The assailants, wielding their falchions with one hand, strove with the other to drag down the structure of the barricade. On the other side, the parts were reversed; and the defenders exposed themselves like madmen to protect their rampart. So for some minutes the contest raged almost in silence, friend and foe falling one upon another. But it is always the easier to destroy; and when a single note upon the tucket recalled the attacking party from this desperate service, much of the barricade had been removed piecemeal, and the whole fabric had sunk to half its height, and tottered to a general fall.

And now the footmen in the market-place fell back, at a run, on every side. The horsemen, who had been standing in a line two deep, wheeled suddenly, and made their flank into their front; and as swift as a striking adder, the long, steel-clad column was launched upon the ruinous barricade.

Of the first two horsemen, one fell, rider and steed, and was ridden down by his companions. The second leaped clean upon the summit of the rampart, transpiercing an archer with his lance. Almost in the same instant he was dragged from the saddle and his horse despatched.

And then the full weight and impetus of the charge burst upon and scattered the defenders. The men-at-arms, surmounting their fallen comrades, and carried onward by the fury of their onslaught, dashed through Dick's broken line and poured thundering up the lane beyond, as a stream bestrides and pours across a broken dam.

Yet was the fight not over. Still, in the narrow jaws of the entrance, Dick and a few survivors plied their bills like woodmen ; and already, across the width of the passage, there had been formed a second, a higher, and a more effectual rampart of fallen men and disembowelled horses, lashing in the agonies of death.

Baffled by this fresh obstacle, the remainder of the cavalry fell back ; and as, at the sight of this movement, the flight of arrows redoubled from the casements of the houses, their retreat had, for a moment, almost degenerated into flight.

Almost at the same time, those who had crossed the barricade and charged farther up the street, being met before the door of the Chequers by the formidable hunchback and the whole reserve of the Yorkists, began to come scattering backward, in the excess of disarray and terror.

Dick and his fellows faced about, fresh men poured out of the houses ; a cruel blast of arrows met the fugitives full in the face, while Gloucester was already riding down their rear ; in the inside of a minute and a half there was no living Lancastrian in the street.

Then, and not till then, did Dick hold up his reeking blade and give the word to cheer.

Meanwhile Gloucester dismounted from his horse and came forward to inspect the post. His face was as pale as linen ; but his eyes shone in his head like some strange jewel, and his voice, when he spoke, was hoarse and broken with the exultation of battle and success. He looked at the rampart, which neither friend nor foe could now approach without precaution, so fiercely did the horses struggle in the throes of death, and at the sight of that great carnage he smiled upon one side.

"Despatch these horses," he said ; "they keep you from your vantage. Richard Shelton," he added, "ye have pleased me. Kneel."

The Lancastrians had already resumed their archery, and the shafts fell thick in the mouth of the street ; but the duke, minding them not at all, deliberately drew his sword and dubbed Richard a knight upon the spot.

"And now, Sir Richard," he continued, "if that ye see Lord Risingham, send me an express upon the instant. Were it your last man, let me hear of it incontinently. I had rather venture the post than lose my stroke at him. For mark me, all of ye," he added, raising his voice, "if Earl Risingham fall by another hand than mine, I shall count this victory a defeat."

"My lord duke," said one of his attendants, "is your grace not weary of exposing his dear life unneedfully ? Why tarry we here ?"

"Catesby," returned the duke, "here is the battle, not elsewhere. The rest are but feigned onslaughts. Here must we vanquish. And for the exposure—if ye were an ugly hunchback, and the children gecked at you upon the street, ye would count your body cheaper, and an hour of glory worth a life. Howbeit, if ye will, let us ride on and visit the other posts. Sir Richard here, my namesake, he shall still hold this entry, where he wadeth to the ankles in hot blood. Him can we trust. But mark

it, Sir Richard, ye are not yet done. The worst is yet to ward. Sleep not."

He came right up to young Shelton, looking him hard in the eyes, and taking his hand in both of his, gave it so extreme a squeeze that the blood had nearly spurted. Dick quailed before his eyes. The insane excitement, the courage, and the cruelty that he read therein, filled him with dismay about the future. This young duke's was indeed a gallant spirit, to ride foremost in the ranks of war ; but, after the battle, in the days of peace and in the circle of his trusted friends, that mind, it was to be dreaded, would continue to bring forth the fruits of death.

Dick, once more left to his own counsels, began to look about him. The arrow-shot had somewhat slackened. On all sides the enemy were falling back ; and the greater part of the market-place was now left empty, the snow here trampled into orange mud, there splashed with gore, scattered all over with dead men and horses, and bristling thick with feathered arrows.

On his own side the loss had been cruel. The jaws of the little street and the ruins of the barricade were heaped with the dead and dying ; and out of the hundred men with whom he had begun the battle, there were not seventy left who could still stand to arms.

At the same time the day was passing. The first reinforcements might be looked for to arrive at any moment ; and the Lancastrians, already shaken by the result of their desperate but unsuccessful onslaught, were in an ill-temper to support a fresh invader.

There was a dial in the wall of one of the two flanking houses ; and this, in the frosty, winter sunshine, indicated ten of the forenoon.

Dick turned to the man who was at his elbow, a little insignificant archer, binding a cut in his arm.

"It was well fought," he said, "and, by my sooth, they will not charge us twice."

"Sir," said the little archer, "ye have fought right well for York, and better for yourself. Never hath man in so brief space prevailed so greatly on the duke's affections. That he should have entrusted such a post to one he knew not is a marvel. But look to your head, Sir Richard! If ye be vanquished—ay, if ye give way one foot's breadth—axe or cord shall punish it; and I am set, if ye do aught doubtful, I will tell you honestly, here to stab you from behind."

Dick looked at the little man in amaze.

"You!" he cried. "And from behind!"

"It is right so," returned the archer; "and because I like not the affair I tell it you. Ye must make the post good, Sir Richard, at your peril. O, our Crookback is a bold blade and a good warrior; but whether in cold blood or in hot, he will have all things done exact to his commandment. If any fail or hinder, they shall die the death."

"Now, by the saints!" cried Richard, "is this so? And will men follow such a leader?"

"Nay, they follow him gleefully," replied the other; "for if he be exact to punish, he is most open-handed to reward. And if he spare not the blood and sweat of others, he is ever liberal of his own, still in the first front of battle, still the last to sleep. He will go far, will Crookback Dick o' Gloucester!"

The young knight, if he had been before brave and vigilant, was now all the more inclined to watchfulness and courage. His sudden favour, he began to perceive, had brought perils in its train. And he turned from the archer, and once more scanned anxiously the marketplace. It lay empty as before.

"I like not this quietude," he said. "Doubtless they prepare us some surprise."

And, as if in answer to his remark, the archers began once more to advance against the barricade, and the

arrows to fall thick. But there was something hesitating in the attack. They came not on roundly, but seemed rather to await a further signal.

Dick looked uneasily about him, spying for a hidden danger. And sure enough, about half-way up the little street, a door was suddenly opened from within, and the house continued, for some seconds, and both by door and window, to disgorge a torrent of Lancastrian archers. These, as they leaped down, hurriedly stood to their ranks, bent their bows, and proceeded to pour upon Dick's rear a flight of arrows.

At the same time, the assailants in the market-place redoubled their shot, and began to close in stoutly upon the barricade.

Dick called down his whole command out of the houses, and facing them both ways, and encouraging their valour both by word and gesture, returned as best he could the double shower of shafts that fell about his post.

Meanwhile house after house was opened in the street, and the Lancastrians continued to pour out of the doors and leap down from the windows, shouting victory, until the number of enemies upon Dick's rear was almost equal to the number in his face. It was plain that he could hold the post no longer ; what was worse, even if he could have held it, it had now become useless ; and the whole Yorkist army lay in a posture of helplessness upon the brink of a complete disaster.

The men behind him formed the vital flaw in the general defence ; and it was upon these that Dick turned, charging at the head of his men. So vigorous was the attack, that the Lancastrian archers gave ground and staggered, and, at last, breaking their ranks, began to crowd back into the houses from which they had so recently and so vaingloriously sallied.

Meanwhile the men from the market-place had swarmed across the undefended barricade, and fell on hotly upon

the other side ; and Dick must once again face about, and proceed to drive them back. Once again the spirit of his men prevailed ; they cleared the street in a triumphant style, but even as they did so the others issued again out of the houses, and took them, a third time, upon the rear.

The Yorkists began to be scattered ; several times Dick found himself alone among his foes and plying his bright sword for life ; several times he was conscious of a hurt. And meanwhile the fight swayed to and fro in the street without determinate result.

Suddenly Dick was aware of a great trumpeting about the outskirts of the town. The war-cry of York began to be rolled up to heaven, as by many and triumphant voices. And at the same time the men in front of him began to give ground rapidly, streaming out of the street and back upon the market-place. Some one gave the word to fly. Trumpets were blown distractedly, some for a rally, some to charge. It was plain that a great blow had been struck, and the Lancastrians were thrown, at least for the moment, into full disorder, and some degree of panic.

And then, like a theatre trick, there followed the last act of Shoreby Battle. The men in front of Richard turned tail, like a dog that has been whistled home, and fled like the wind. At the same moment there came through the market-place a storm of horsemen, fleeing and pursuing, the Lancastrians turning back to strike with the sword, the Yorkists riding them down at the point of the lance.

Conspicuous in the mellay, Dick beheld the Crookback. He was already giving a foretaste of that furious valour and skill to cut his way across the ranks of war, which, years afterwards upon the field of Bosworth, and when he was stained with crimes, almost sufficed to change the fortunes of the day and the destiny of the English throne. Evading, striking, riding down, he so forced and so manœuvred his strong horse, so aptly defended himself,

and so liberally scattered death to his opponents, that he was now far ahead of the foremost of his knights, hewing his way, with the truncheon of a bloody sword, to where Lord Risingham was rallying the bravest. A moment more and they had met ; the tall, splendid, and famous warrior against the deformed and sickly boy.

Yet Shelton had never a doubt of the result ; and when the fight next opened for a moment, the figure of the earl had disappeared ; but still, in the first of the danger, Crookback Dick was launching his big horse and plying the truncheon of his sword.

Thus, by Shelton's courage in holding the mouth of the street against the first attack, and by the opportune arrival of his seven hundred reinforcements, the lad, who was afterwards to be handed down to the execration of posterity under the name of Richard III, had won his first considerable fight.

From "The Black Arrow"

WOLSEY'S FALL

W. HARRISON AINSWORTH

THE Wars of the Roses were over, and Henry VII had been succeeded by Henry VIII. Thomas Wolsey, the King's minister, had risen to great eminence in Church and State, but in so doing he had made many enemies, against whom the King protected him. But when the King, tired of Queen Catherine and anxious to wed Anne Boleyn, failed to obtain from the Pope the divorce he desired, Wolsey became the scapegoat. This story gives you one version of the minister's disgrace.

WHILE Henry was revolving the expediency of accomplishing the divorce through the medium of his own ecclesiastical courts, and without reference to that of Rome, a despatch was received from the Pope by the two Cardinals, requiring them to cite the King to appear before him by attorney on a certain day. At the time of the arrival of this instrument, Campeggio chanced to be staying with Wolsey at his palace at Esher, and as the King was then holding his court at Windsor, they both set out for the castle on the following day, attended by a retinue of nearly a hundred horsemen, splendidly equipped.

It was now the middle of September, and the woods, instead of presenting one uniform mass of green, glowed with an infinite variety of lovely tints. And yet, despite the beauty of the scene, there was something melancholy in witnessing the decline of the year, as marked by those

old woods, and by the paths that led through them, so thickly strewn with leaves. Wolsey was greatly affected. "These noble trees will ere long be reft of all their glories," he thought, "and so, most likely, will it be with me, and perhaps my winter may come on sooner than theirs!"

The Cardinal and his train had crossed Staines Bridge, and passing through Egham, had entered the great park near Englefield green. They were proceeding along the high ridge overlooking the woody region between it and the castle, when a joyous shout in the glade beneath reached them, and looking down, they saw the King, accompanied by Anne Boleyn, and attended by his falconers and a large company of horsemen, pursuing the sport of hawking. The royal party appeared so much interested in their sport that they did not notice the Cardinal and his train, and were soon out of sight. But as Wolsey descended Snow Hill, and entered the long avenue, he heard the trampling of horses at a little distance, and shortly afterwards Henry and Anne issued from out the trees. They were somewhat more than a bow-shot in advance of the Cardinal; but instead of halting till he came up, the King had no sooner ascertained who it was than, despatching a messenger to the castle, who was seen galloping swiftly down the avenue, he rode off with Anne Boleyn towards the opposite side of the park. Though deeply mortified by the slight, Wolsey concealed his vexation from his brother cardinal, and pursued his way to the castle, before which he presently arrived. The gate was thrown open at his approach, but he had scarcely entered the lower ward, when Sir Henry Norris, the King's groom of the stole, advanced to meet him, and, with a sorrowful expression of countenance, said that his royal master had so many guests at the castle, that he could not accommodate him and his train.

"I understand your drift, sir," replied Wolsey, "you

would tell me I am not welcome. Well, then, his eminence Cardinal Campeggio and myself must take up our lodging at some hostel in the town, for it is necessary we should see the King."

"If your Grace is content to dismiss your attendants," said Norris, in a low tone, "you and Cardinal Campeggio can be lodged in Henry the Third's Tower. This much I will take upon me; but I dare not admit you to the royal lodgings."

Wolsey tried to look unconcerned, and calling to his gentleman usher, George Cavendish, gave him some instructions in a low voice, upon which the other immediately placed himself at the head of the retinue, and ordered them to quit the castle with him, leaving only the jester, Patch, to attend upon his master. Campeggio's attendants being, comparatively speaking, few in number, were allowed to remain, and his litter was conveyed to Henry the Third's Tower—a fortification standing in the south side of the lower ward, near the edge of the dry moat surrounding the Round Tower. At the steps of this tower Wolsey dismounted, and was about to follow Campeggio into the doorway, when Will Sommers, who had heard of his arrival, stepped forward, and with a salutation of mock formality, said, "I am sure it will grieve the King, my master, not to be able to accommodate your grace's train; but since it is larger than his own, you will scarce blame him for his want of hospitality."

"Nor the courtesy of his attendants," rejoined Wolsey, sharply. "I am in no mood for thy jesting now. Stand aside, sirrah, or I will have the rod applied to thy back!"

"Take care the King does not apply the rod to your own, Lord Cardinal," retorted Will Sommers. "If he scourges you according to your deserts, your skin will be redder than your robe." And his mocking laugh pursued Wolsey like the hiss of a snake into the tower.

Some two hours after this, Henry and his attendants

returned from the chase. The King seemed in a blithe humour, and Wolsey saw him laugh heartily as Will Sommers pointed with his bauble towards Henry the Third's Tower. The Cardinal received no invitation to the royal banquet ; and the answer to his solicitation for an interview was, that he and Campeggio would be received in the presence-chamber on the following morning, but not before.

That night a great revel was held in the castle. Masquing, dancing, and feasting filled up the evening, and the joyous sounds and strains reached Wolsey in his seclusion, and forced him to contrast it with his recent position, when he would have been second only to the King in the entertainment. He laid his head upon his pillow, but not to rest. . . . Sleep would not be summoned, and as soon as the first glimpse of day appeared, he arose, and wrapping his robe around him, left his room and ascended a winding staircase leading to the roof of the tower.

The morning promised to be fine, but it was then hazy, and the greater part of the forest was wrapped in mist. The castle, however, was seen to great advantage. Above Wolsey rose the vast fabric of the Round Tower, on the summit of which the broad standard was at that moment being unfurled ; while the different battlements and towers rose majestically around. But Wolsey's gaze rested chiefly upon the exquisite mausoleum lying immediately beneath him, in which he had partly prepared for himself a magnificent monument. A sharp pang shook him as he contemplated it, and he cried aloud, " My very tomb will be wrested from me by this rapacious monarch ; and after all my care and all my cost, I know not where I shall rest my bones ! "

Saddened by the reflection, he descended to his chamber, and again threw himself on the couch.

But Wolsey was not the only person in the castle who had passed a sleepless night. Of the host of his enemies

many had been kept awake by the anticipation of his downfall on the morrow ; and among these was Anne Boleyn, who had received assurance from the King that her enmity should at length be fully gratified.

At the appointed hour, the two Cardinals proceeded to the royal lodgings. They were detained for some time in the ante-chamber, where Wolsey was exposed to the taunts and sneers of the courtiers, who had lately so servilely fawned upon him. At length they were ushered into the presence-chamber, at the upper end of which, beneath a canopy emblazoned with the royal arms woven in gold, sat Henry, with Anne Boleyn on his right hand. At the foot of the throne stood Will Sommers, and near him the Dukes of Richmond and Suffolk. Norfolk, Rochford, and a number of other nobles, all open enemies of Wolsey, were also present. Henry watched the advance of the Cardinals with a stern look, and after they had made an obeisance to him, he motioned them to rise.

“ You have sought an interview with me, my lords,” he said, with suppressed rage. “ What would you ? ”

“ We have brought an instrument to you, my liege,” said Wolsey, “ which has just been received from his holiness the Pope.”

“ Declare its nature,” said Henry.

“ It is a citation,” replied Wolsey, “ enjoining your highness to appear by attorney in the Papal Court, under a penalty of ten thousand ducats.”

And he presented a parchment, stamped with the great seal of Rome, to the King, who glanced his eye fiercely over it, and then dashed it to the ground, with an explosion of fury terrible to hear and to witness.

“ Ha ! by Saint George ! ” he cried ; “ am I as nothing that the Pope dares to insult me thus ? ”

“ It is a mere judicial form, your Majesty,” interposed Campeggio ; “ and is chiefly sent by his holiness to let

you know we have no further jurisdiction in the matter of the divorce."

"I will take care you have not, nor his holiness either," roared the King. "By my father's head, he shall find I will be no longer trifled with."

"But, my liege," cried Campeggio.

"Peace!" cried the King. "I will hear no apologies nor excuses. The insult has been offered, and cannot be effaced. As for you, Wolsey——"

"Sire!" exclaimed the Cardinal, shrinking before the whirlwind of passion, which seemed to menace his utter extermination.

"As for you, I say," pursued Henry, extending his hand towards him, while his eyes flashed fire, "who by your outrageous pride have so long overshadowed our honour—who by your insatiate avarice and appetite for wealth have oppressed our subjects—who by your manifold acts of bribery and extortion have impoverished our realm, and by your cruelty and partiality have subverted the due course of justice, and turned it to your ends—the time is come when you shall receive due punishment for your offences."

"You wrong me, my dear liege," cried Wolsey, abjectly. "These are the accusations of my enemies. Grant me a patient hearing, and I will explain all."

"I would not sharpen the King's resentment against you, Lord Cardinal," said Anne Boleyn, "for it is keen enough; but I cannot permit you to say that these charges are merely hostile. Those who would support the King's honour and dignity must desire to see you removed from his counsels."

"I am ready to take thy place, Lord Cardinal," said Will Sommers; "and will exchange my bauble for thy chancellor's mace, and my fool's cap for thy cardinal's hat."

"Peace!" thundered the King. "Stand not between me and the object of my wrath. Your accusers are not

one, but many, Wolsey ; nay, the whole of my people cry out for justice against you. And they shall have it. But you shall hear the charges they bring. Firstly, contrary to our prerogative, and for your own advancement and profit, you have obtained authority legatine from the Pope ; by which authority you have not only spoiled and taken away their substance from many religious houses, but have usurped much of our own jurisdiction. You have also made a treaty with the King of France for the Pope without our consent, and concluded another friendly treaty with the Duke of Ferrara, under our great seal, and in our name, without our warrant. And furthermore you have presumed to couple yourself with our royal self in your letters and instructions, as if you were on an equality with us."

"Ha ! Ha ! 'The King and I would have you do thus !' 'The King and I give you our hearty thanks !' Ran it not so, Cardinal ?" cried Will Sommers. "You will soon win the cap and bells."

"In exercise of your legatine authority," pursued the King, "you have given away benefices contrary to our crown and dignity, for the which you are in danger of forfeiture of your lands and goods."

"A praemunire, Cardinal," cried Will Sommers. "A praemunire !—ha ! ha !"

"Then it has been your practice to receive all the ambassadors to our Court first at your own palace," continued Henry, "to hear their charges and intentions, and to instruct them as you might see fit. You have also so practised that all our letters sent from beyond sea have first come to your own hands, by which you have acquainted yourself with their contents, and compelled us and our council to follow your devices. You have also written to all our ambassadors abroad in your own name concerning our affairs, without our authority ; and received letters in return from them by which you have sought to compass your own purposes. By your ambition and pride

you have undone many of our poor subjects ; have suppressed religious houses, and received their possessions ; have seized upon the goods of wealthy spiritual men deceased ; constrained all ordinaries yearly to compound with you ; have gotten riches for yourself and servants by subversion of the laws, and by abuse of your authority in causing divers pardons of the Pope to be suspended until you, by promise of a yearly pension, chose to revive them ; and also by crafty and untrue tales have sought to create dissension among our nobles."

"That we can all avouch for," cried Suffolk. "It were never merry in England while there were cardinals among us."

"Of all men in England your Grace should be the last to say so," rejoined Wolsey ; "for if I had not been Cardinal you would not have had a head upon your shoulders to utter the taunt."

"No more of this !" cried the King. "You have misdemeaned yourself in our Court by keeping up as great state in our absence as if we had been there in person, and presumptuously have dared to join and imprint your badge, the Cardinal's hat, under our arms, graven on our coins struck at York. And lastly, whenever in open Parliament allusion hath been made to heresies and erroneous sects, you have failed to correct and notice them, to the danger of the whole body of good and Christian people of this our realm."

"This last charge ought to win me favour in the eyes of one who professes the opinions of Luther," said Wolsey to Anne. "But I deny it, as I do all the rest."

"I will listen to no defence, Wolsey," replied the King. "I will make you a terrible example to others how they offend us and our laws hereafter."

"Do not condemn me unheard !" cried the Cardinal, prostrating himself.

"I have heard too much, and I will hear no more !"

cried the King fiercely. "I dismiss you from my presence for ever. If you are innocent, as you aver, justice will be done you. If you are guilty, as I believe you to be, look not for leniency from me, for I will show you none." And, seating himself, he turned to Anne, and said, in a low tone, "Are you content, sweetheart?"

"I am," she replied. "I shall not break my vow. False Cardinal," she added aloud, "your reign is at an end."

"Your own may not be much longer, madam," rejoined Wolsey, bitterly. "The shadow of the axe," he added, pointing to the reflection of a partisan on the floor, "is at your feet. Ere long it may rise to the head."

And, accompanied by Campeggio, he slowly quitted the presence-chamber.

From "Windsor Castle"

THE GREAT ARMADA

CHARLES KINGSLEY

THEN came the Reformation and the dreadful religious persecutions of the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth. Why did Philip of Spain, Mary's husband and Elizabeth's suitor, make war on England? Foreign politics of these days are beginning to be complicated, but it would be well to remember what hindrances the English had placed in the way of Spain's reconquest of her rebellious Protestant Dutch provinces, and what provocation Philip had received from the English sea-dogs, seeking for plunder on the Spanish Main.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep,
Her march is o'er the mountain-wave,
Her home is on the deep.

CAMPBELL, *Ye Mariners of England*

AND now began that great sea-fight which was to determine whether Popery and despotism, or Protestantism and freedom, were the law which God had appointed for the half of Europe, and the whole of future America. It is a twelve days' epic, worthy, not of dull prose, but of the thunder-roll of Homer's verse; but having to tell it, I must do my best, rather using, where I can, the words of contemporary authors than my own.

"The Lord High Admirall of England, sending a pinnace before, called the *Defiance*, denounced war by discharging her ordnance; and presently approaching

within musquet-shot, with much thundering out of his own ship, called the *Arkroyall* (*alias* the *Triumph*), first set upon the Admirall's, as he thought, of the Spaniards (but it was Alfonso de Leon's ship). Soon after, Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher played stoutly with their ordnance on the hindmost squadron, which was commanded by Recalde." The Spaniards soon discover the superior "nimbleness of the English ships"; and Recalde's squadron, finding that they are getting more than they give, in spite of his endeavours, hurry forward to join the rest of the fleet. Medina the Admiral, finding his ships scattering fast, gathers them into a half-moon; and the Armada tries to keep solemn way forward, like a stately herd of buffaloes, who march on across the prairie, disdaining to notice the wolves which snarl around their track. But in vain. These are no wolves, but cunning hunters, swiftly horsed, and keenly armed, and who will "shamefully shuffle" (to use Drake's own expression) that vast herd from the Lizard to Portland, from Portland to Calais Roads; and who, even in this short two hours' fight, have made many a Spaniard question the boasted invincibleness of this Armada.

One of the four great galliasses is already riddled with shot, to the great disarrangement of her "pulpits, chapels," and friars therein assistant. The fleet has to close round her, or Drake and Hawkins will sink her; in effecting which manœuvre, the "principal galleon of Seville," in which are Pedro de Valdez and a host of blue-blooded Dons, runs foul of her neighbour, carries away her foremast, and is, in spite of Spanish chivalry, left to her fate. This does not look like victory, certainly. But courage! though Valdez be left behind, "our Lady," and the saints, and the Bull *Cœnâ Domini* (dictated by one whom I dare not name here), are with them still, and it were blasphemous to doubt. But in the meanwhile, if they have fared no better than this against a third of the

Plymouth fleet, how will they fare when those forty belated ships, which are already whitening the blue between them and the Mewstone, enter the scene to play their part ?

So ends the first day ; not an English ship, hardly a man, is hurt. It has destroyed for ever, in English minds, the prestige of boastful Spain. It has justified utterly the policy which the good Lord Howard had adopted by Raleigh's and Drake's advice, of keeping up a running fight, instead of "clapping ships together without consideration," in which case, says Raleigh, "he had been lost, if he had not been better advised than a great many malignant fools were, who found fault with his demeanour."

Be that as it may, so ends the first day, in which Amyas and the other Bideford ships have been right busy for two hours, knocking holes in a huge galleon, which carries on her poop a maiden with a wheel, and bears the name of *Sta Catharina*. She had a coat-of-arms on the flag at her sprit, probably those of the commandant of soldiers ; but they were shot away early in the fight, so Amyas cannot tell whether they were De Soto's or not. Nevertheless, there is plenty of time for private revenge ; and Amyas, called off at last by the Admiral's signal, goes to bed and sleeps soundly.

But ere he has been in his hammock an hour, he is awakened by Cary's coming down to ask for orders.

"We were to follow Drake's lantern, Amyas ; but where it is, I can't see, unless he has been taken up aloft there among the stars for a new Drakium Sidus."

Amyas turns out grumbling ; but no lantern is to be seen ; only a sudden explosion and a great fire on board some Spaniard, which is gradually got under, while they have to lie-to the whole night long, with nearly the whole fleet.

The next morning finds them off Torbay ; and Amyas is hailed by a pinnace, bringing a letter from Drake, which

(saving the spelling, which was somewhat arbitrary, like most men's in those days) ran somewhat thus :

DEAR LAD,

I have been wool-gathering all night after five great hulks, which the Pixies transfigured overnight into galleons, and this morning again into German merchantmen. I let them go with my blessing ; and coming back, fell in (God be thanked !) with Valdez' great galleon ; and in it good booty, which the Dons his fellows had left behind, like faithful and valiant comrades, and the Lord Howard had let slip past him, thinking her deserted by her crew. I have sent to Dartmouth a sight of noblemen and gentlemen, maybe a half-hundred ; and Valdez himself, who when I sent my pinnace aboard must needs stand on his punctilios, and propound conditions. I answered him, I had no time to tell with him ; if he would needs die, then I was the very man for him ; if he would live, then, *buena guerra*. He sends again, boasting that he was Don Pedro Valdez, and that it stood not with his honour, and that of the Dons in his company. I replied, that for my part, I was Francis Drake, and my matches burning. Whereon he finds in my name salve for the wounds of his own, and comes aboard, kissing my fist, with Spanish lies of holding himself fortunate that he had fallen into the hands of fortunate Drake, and much more, which he might have kept to cool his porridge. But I have much news from him (for he is a leaky tub) ; and among others, this, that your Don Guzman is aboard of the *Sta Catharina*, commandant of her soldiery, and had his arms flying at her sprit, beside *Sta Catharina* at the poop, which is a maiden with a wheel, and is a lofty built ship of 3 tier of ordnance, from which God preserve you, and send you like luck with

Your deare Friend and Admirall,

F. DRAKE

“ She sails in this squadron of Recalde. The Armada was minded to smoke us out of Plymouth ; and God's grace it was they tried not ; but their orders from home

are too strait, and so the slaves fight like a bull in a tether, no farther than their rope, finding thus the devil a hard master, as do most in the end. They cannot compass our quick handling and tacking, and take us for very witches. So far so good, and better to come. You and I know the length of their foot of old. Time and light will kill any hare, and they will find it a long way from Start to Dunkirk."

"The Admiral is in a gracious humour, Leigh, to have vouchsafed you so long a letter."

"*St Catharine!* why, that was the galleon we hammered all yesterday!" said Amyas, stamping on the deck.

"Of course it was. Well, we shall find her again, doubt not. That cunning old Drake! how he has contrived to line his own pockets, even though he had to keep the whole fleet waiting for him."

"He has given the Lord High Admiral the dor, at all events."

"Lord Howard is too high-hearted to stop and plunder, Papist though he is, Amyas."

Amyas answered by a growl, for he worshipped Drake, and was not too just to Papists.

The fleet did not find Lord Howard till nightfall; he and Lord Sheffield had been holding on steadfastly the whole night after the Spanish lanterns, with two ships only. At least there was no doubt now of the loyalty of English Roman Catholics, and, indeed, throughout the fight, the Howards showed (as if to wipe out the slurs which had been cast on their loyalty by fanatics) a desperate courage, which might have thrust less prudent men into destruction, but led them only to victory. Soon a large Spaniard drifts by, deserted and partly burnt. Some of the men are for leaving their place to board her; but Amyas stoutly refuses. He has "come out to fight, and not to plunder; so let the nearest ship to her have her luck without grudging." They pass on, and the men pull

long faces when they see the galleon snapped up by their next neighbour, and towed off to Weymouth, where she proves to be the ship of Miguel d'Oquenda, the Vice-Admiral, which they saw last night, all but blown up by some desperate Netherland gunner, who, being "mis-used," was minded to pay off old scores on his tyrants.

And so ends the second day ; while the Portland rises higher and clearer every hour. The next morning finds them off the island. Will they try Portsmouth, though they have spared Plymouth ? The wind has shifted to the north, and blows clear and cool off the white-walled downs of Weymouth Bay. The Spaniards turn and face the English. They must mean to stand off and on until the wind shall change, and then to try for the Needles. At least they shall have some work to do before they round Purbeck Isle.

The English go to the westward again : but it is only to return on the opposite tack ; and now begin a series of manœuvres, each fleet trying to get the wind of the other ; but the struggle does not last long, and ere noon the English fleet have slipped close-hauled between the Armada and the land, and are coming down upon them right before the wind.

And now begins a fight most fierce and fell. " And fight they did confusedly, and with variable fortunes ; while, on the one hand, the English manfully rescued the ships of London, which were hemmed in by the Spaniards ; and, on the other side, the Spaniards as stoutly delivered Recalde, being in danger." Never was heard such thundering of ordnance on both sides, which notwithstanding from the Spaniards flew for the most part over the English without harm. " Only Cock, an Englishman " (whom Prince claims, I hope rightfully, as a worthy of Devon), " died with honour in the midst of the enemies in a small ship of his. For the English ships, being far the lesser, charged the enemy with marvellous agility ;

and having discharged their broadsides, flew forth presently into the deep, and levelled their shot directly, without missing, at those great and unwieldy Spanish ships." "This was the most furious and bloody skirmish of all" (though ending only, it seems, in the capture of a great Venetian and some small craft), "in which the Lord Admiral fighting amidst his enemies' fleet, and seeing one of his captains afar off (Fenner by name, he who fought the seven Portugals at the Azores), cried, 'O George, what doest thou? Wilt thou now frustrate my hope and opinion conceived of thee? Wilt thou forsake me now?' With which words he being enflamed, approached, and did the part of a valiant captain"; as, indeed, did all the rest.

Night falls upon the floating volcano; and morning finds them far past Purbeck, with the white peak of Freshwater ahead; and pouring out past the Needles, ship after ship, to join the gallant chase. For now from all havens, in vessels fitted out at their own expense, flock the chivalry of England; the Lords Oxford, Northumberland, and Cumberland, Pallavicin, Brooke, Carew, Raleigh, and Blunt, and many another honourable name, "as to a set field, where immortal fame and honour was to be attained." Spain has staked her chivalry in that mighty cast; not a noble house of Arragon or Castile but has lent a brother or a son—and shall mourn the loss of one; and England's gentlemen will measure their strength once for all against the Cavaliers of Spain. Lord Howard has sent forward light craft into Portsmouth for ammunition; but they will scarce return to-night, for the wind falls dead, and all the evening the two fleets drift helpless with the tide, and shout idle defiance at each other with trumpet, fife, and drum.

The sun goes down upon a glassy sea, and rises on a glassy sea again. But what day is this? The twenty-fifth, St James's day, sacred to the patron saint of Spain. Shall

nothing be attempted in his honour by those whose forefathers have so often seen him with their bodily eyes, charging in their van upon his snow-white steed, and scattering Paynims with celestial lance? He might have sent them, certainly, a favouring breeze; perhaps he only means to try their faith; at least the galleys shall attack; and in their van three of the great galliasses (the fourth lies half-crippled among the fleet) thrash the sea to foam with three hundred oars apiece; and see, not St James leading them to victory, but Lord Howard's *Triumph*, his brother's *Lion*, Southwell's *Elizabeth Jonas*, Lord Sheffield's *Bear*, Barker's *Victory*, and George Fenner's *Leicester*, towed stoutly out to meet them with such salvoes of chain-shot, smashing oars, and cutting rigging, that had not the wind sprung up again toward noon, and the Spanish fleet come up to rescue them, they had shared the fate of Valdez and the Biscayan. And now the fight becomes general. Frobisher beats down the Spanish Admiral's mainmast; and, attacked himself by Mexia and Recalde, is rescued by Lord Howard; who, himself endangered in his turn, is rescued in his turn; "while after that day" (so sickened were they of the English gunnery), "no galliasse would adventure to fight."

And so, with variable fortune, the fight thunders on the live-long afternoon, beneath the virgin cliffs of Freshwater; while myriad sea-fowl rise screaming up from every ledge, and spot with their black wings the snow-white wall of chalk; and the lone shepherd hurries down the slopes above to peer over the dizzy edge, and forgets the wheatear fluttering in his snare, while he gazes trembling upon glimpses of tall masts and gorgeous flags, piercing at times the league-broad veil of sulphur-smoke which welters far below.

So fares St James's day, as Baal's did on Carmel in old time. "Either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is

on a journey ; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." At least, the only fire by which he has answered his votaries, has been that of English cannon : and the Armada, " gathering itself into a roundel," will fight no more, but make the best of its way to Calais, where perhaps the Guises' faction may have a French force ready to assist them, and then to Dunkirk, to join with Parma and the great flotilla of the Netherlands.

So on, before " a fair Etesian gale," which follows clear and bright out of the south-south-west, glide forward the two great fleets, past Brighton Cliffs and Beachy Head, Hastings and Dungeness. Is it a battle or a triumph ? For by sea Lord Howard, instead of fighting is rewarding ; and after Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Sheffield, Townsend, and Frobisher have received at his hands that knighthood, which was then more honourable than a peerage, old Admiral Hawkins kneels and rises up Sir John, and shaking his shoulders after the accolade, observes to the representative of majesty, that his " old woman will hardly know herself again, when folks call her My Lady."

And meanwhile the cliffs are lined with pikemen and musketeers, and by every countryman and groom who can bear arms, led by their squires and sheriffs, marching eastward as fast as their weapons let them, towards the Dover shore. And not with them alone. From many a mile inland come down women and children, and aged folk in waggons, to join their feeble shouts, and prayers which are not feeble, to that great cry of mingled faith and fear which ascends to the throne of God from the spectators of Britain's Salamis.

Let them pray on. The danger is not over yet, though Lord Howard has had news from Newhaven that the Guises will not stir against England, and Seymour and Winter have left their post of observation on the Flemish shores, to make up the number of the fleet to a hundred

and forty sail—larger, slightly, than that of the Spanish fleet, but of not more than half the tonnage, or one-third the number of men. The Spaniards are dispirited and battered, but unbroken still; and as they slide to their anchorage in Calais Roads on the Saturday evening of that most memorable week, all prudent men know well that England's hour is come, and that the bells which will call all Christendom to church upon the morrow morn, will be either the death-knell or the triumphal peal of the Reformed faith throughout the world.

A solemn day that Sabbath must have been in country and in town. And many a light-hearted coward, doubtless, who had scoffed (as many did) at the notion of the Armada's coming, because he dare not face the thought, gave himself up to abject fear, "as he now plainly saw and heard that of which before he would not be persuaded." And many a brave man, too, as he knelt beside his wife and daughters, felt his heart sink to the very pavement, at the thought of what those beloved ones might be enduring a few short days hence, from a profligate and fanatical soldiery, or from the more deliberate fiendishness of the Inquisition. The massacre of St Bartholomew, the fires of Smithfield, the immolation of the Moors, the extermination of the West Indians, the fantastic horrors of the Piedmontese persecution, which make unreadable the too truthful pages of Morland—these were the spectres, which, not as now, dim and distant through the mist of centuries, but recent, bleeding from still gaping wounds, flitted before the eyes of every Englishman, and filled his brain and heart with fire.

He knew full well the fate in store for him and his. One false step, and the unspeakable doom which, not two generations afterwards, befell the Lutherans of Magdeburg, would have befallen every town from London to Carlisle. All knew the hazard, as they prayed that day, and many a day before and after, throughout England and

the Netherlands. And none knew it better than She who was the guiding spirit of that devoted land, and the especial mark of the invaders' fury ; and who, by some Divine inspiration (as men then not unwisely held), devised herself the daring stroke which was to anticipate the coming blow.

But where is Amyas Leigh all this while ? Day after day he has been seeking the *Sta Catharina* in the thickest of the press, and cannot come at her, cannot even hear of her : one moment he dreads that she has sunk by night, and balked him of his prey ; the next, that she has repaired her damages, and will escape him after all. He is moody, discontented, restless, even (for the first time in his life) peevish with his men. He can talk of nothing but Don Guzman ; he can find no better employment, at every spare moment, than taking his sword out of the sheath, and handling it, fondling it, talking to it even, bidding it not to fail him in the day of vengeance. At last, he has sent to Squire, the armourer, for a whetstone, and, half-ashamed of his own folly, whets and polishes it in bye-corners, muttering to himself. That one fixed thought of selfish vengeance has possessed his whole mind ; he forgets England's present need, her past triumph, his own safety, everything but his brother's blood. And yet this is the day for which he has been longing ever since he brought home that magic horn as a fifteen years boy ; the day when he should find himself face to face with an invader, and that invader Antichrist himself. He has believed for years with Drake, Hawkins, Grenvil, and Raleigh, that he was called and sent into the world only to fight the Spaniard : and he is fighting him now, in such a cause, for such a stake, within such battle-lists, as he will never see again : and yet he is not content ; and while throughout that gallant fleet, whole crews are receiving the Communion side by side, and rising with cheerful faces to shake hands, and to rejoice that they are

sharers in Britain's Salamis, Amyas turns away from the holy elements.

"I cannot communicate, Sir John. Charity with all men? I hate, if ever man hated on earth."

"You hate the Lord's foes only, Captain Leigh."

"No, Jack, I hate my own as well."

"But no one in the fleet, sir?"

"Don't try to put me off with the same Jesuit's quibble which that false knave Parson Fletcher invented for one of Doughty's men, to drug his conscience withal when he was plotting against his own admiral. No, Jack, I hate one of whom you know; and somehow that hatred of him keeps me from loving any human being. I am in love and charity with no man, Sir John Brimblecombe—not even with you! Go your ways in God's name, sir! and leave me and the devil alone together, or you'll find my words are true."

Jack departed with a sigh, and while the crew were receiving the Communion on deck, Amyas sate below in the cabin sharpening his sword, and after it, called for a boat, and went on board Drake's ship to ask news of the *Sta Catharina*, and listened scowling to the loud chants and tinkling bells, which came across the water from the Spanish fleet. At last, Drake was summoned by the Lord Admiral, and returned with a secret commission, which ought to bear fruit that night; and Amyas, who had gone with him, helped him till nightfall, and then returned to his own ship as Sir Amyas Leigh, Knight, to the joy and glory of every soul on board, except his moody self.

So there, the livelong summer Sabbath day, before the little high-walled town and the long range of yellow sand-hills, lie those two mighty armaments, scowling at each other, hardly out of gunshot. Messenger after messenger is hurrying toward Bruges to the Duke of Parma, for light craft which can follow these nimble English somewhat better than their own floating castles; and, above all,

entreating him to put to sea at once with all his force. The duke is not with his forces at Dunkirk, but on the future field of Waterloo, paying his devotions to St Mary of Halle in Hainault, in order to make all sure in his Pantheon, and already sees in visions of the night that gentle-souled and pure-lipped saint, Cardinal Allen, placing the crown of England on his head. He returns for answer : first, that his victual is not ready ; next, that his Dutch sailors, who have been kept at their post for many a week at the sword's point, have run away like water ; and thirdly, that over and above all, he cannot come, so "strangely provided of great ordnance and musketeers" are those five-and-thirty Dutch ships, in which round-sterned and stubborn-hearted heretics watch, like terriers at a rat's hole, the entrance of Nieuwport and Dunkirk. Having ensured the private patronage of St Mary of Halle, he will return to-morrow to make experience of its effects : but only hear across the flats of Dixmude the thunder of the fleets, and at Dunkirk the open curses of his officers. For while he has been praying and nothing more, the English have been praying, and something more ; and all that is left for the Prince of Parma is to have a few purveyors, as peace offerings to his sulking army, and then "chafe," as Drake says of him, "like a bear robbed of her whelps."

For Lord Henry Seymour has brought Lord Howard a letter of command from Elizabeth's self ; and Drake has been carrying it out so busily all that Sunday long, that by two o'clock on the Monday morning, eight fire-ships "besmeared with wild-fire, brimstone, pitch, and resin, and all their ordnance charged with bullets and with stones," are stealing down the wind straight for the Spanish fleet, guided by two valiant men of Devon, Young and Prowse. (Let their names live long in the land !) The ships are fired, the men of Devon steal back, and in a moment more, the heaven is red with glare from Dover

Cliffs to Gravelines Tower ; and weary-hearted Belgian boors far away inland, plundered and dragooned for many a hideous year, leap from their beds, and fancy (and not so far wrongly either) that the day of judgment is come at last, to end their woes, and hurl down vengeance on their tyrants.

And then breaks forth one of those disgraceful panics, which so often follow overweening presumption ; and shrieks, oaths, prayers, and reproaches, make night hideous. There are those too on board who recollect well enough Jenebelli's fire-ships at Antwerp three years before, and the wreck which they made of Parma's bridge across the Scheldt. If these should be like them ! And cutting all cables, hoisting any sails, the Invincible Armada goes lumbering wildly out to sea, every ship foul of her neighbour.

The largest of the four galliasses loses her rudder, and drifts helpless to and fro, hindering and confusing. The duke, having (so the Spaniards say) weighed his anchor deliberately instead of leaving it behind him, runs in again after awhile, and fires a signal for return : but his truant sheep are deaf to the shepherd's pipe, and swearing and praying by turns, he runs up Channel towards Gravelines picking up stragglers on his way, who are struggling as they best can among the flats and shallows : but Drake and Fenner have arrived as soon as he. When Monday's sun rises on the quaint old castle and muddy dykes of Gravelines town, the thunder of the cannon recommences, and is not hushed till night. Drake can hang coolly enough in the rear to plunder when he thinks fit ; but when the battle needs it, none can fight more fiercely, among the foremost ; and there is need now, if ever. That Armada must never be allowed to re-form. If it does, its left wing may yet keep the English at bay, while its right drives off the blockading Hollanders from Dunkirk port, and sets Parma and his flotilla free to join them, and to sail in double strength across to the mouth of Thames.

So Drake has weighed anchor, and away up Channel with all his squadron, the moment that he saw the Spanish fleet come up ; and with him Fenner burning to redeem the honour which, indeed, he had never lost ; and ere Fenton, Beeston, Crosse, Ryman, and Lord Southwell can join them, the Devon ships have been worrying the Spaniards for two full hours into confusion worse confounded.

But what is that heavy firing behind them ? Alas for the great galliasse ! She lies like a huge stranded whale, upon the sands where now stands Calais pier ; and Amyas Preston, the future hero of La Guayra, is pounding her into submission, while a fleet of hoys and drumblers look on and help, as jackals might the lion.

Soon, on the south-west horizon, loom up larger and larger two mighty ships, and behind them sail on sail. As they near a shout greets the *Triumph* and the *Bear* ; and on and in the Lord High Admiral glides stately into the thickest of the fight.

True, we have still but some three-and-twenty ships which can cope at all with some ninety of the Spaniards : but we have dash, and daring, and the inspiration of utter need. Now, or never, must the mighty struggle be ended. We worried them off Portland ; we must rend them in pieces now ; and in rushes ship after ship, to smash her broadsides through and through the wooden castles, "sometimes not a pike's length asunder," and then out again to re-load, and give place meanwhile to another. The smaller are fighting with all sails set ; the few larger, who, once in, are careless about coming out again, fight with top-sails loose, and their main and foreyards close down on deck, to prevent being boarded. The duke, Oquenda, and Recalde, having with much ado got clear of the shallows, bear the brunt of the fight to seaward ; but in vain. The day goes against them more and more, as it runs on. Seymour and Winter have battered the great *San Philip*

into a wreck ; her masts are gone by the board ; Pimentelli in the *San Matthew* comes up to take the mastiffs off the fainting bull, and finds them fasten on him instead ; but the *Evangelist*, though smaller, is stouter than the *Deacon*, and of all the shots poured into him, not twenty “lackt him through.” His masts are tottering ; but sink or strike he will not.

“Go ahead, and pound his tough hide, Leigh,” roars Drake off the poop of his ship, while he hammers away at one of the great galliasses. “What right has he to keep us all waiting ?”

Amyas slips in as best he can between Drake and Winter ; as he passes he shouts to his ancient enemy :

“We are with you, sir ; all friends to-day !” and slipping round Winter’s bow, he pours his broadside into those of the *San Matthew*, and then glides on to re-load ; but not to return. For not a pistol shot to leeward, worried by three or four small craft, lies an immense galleon ; and on her poop—can he believe his eyes for joy ?—the maiden and the wheel which he has sought so long !

“There he is !” shouts Amyas, springing to the star-board side of the ship. The men, too, have already caught sight of that hated sign ; a cheer of fury bursts from every throat.

“Steady, men !” says Amyas in a suppressed voice. “Not a shot ! Re-load, and be ready ; I must speak with him first” ; and silent as the grave, amid the infernal din, the *Vengeance* glides up to the Spaniard’s quarter.

“Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto !” shouts Amyas from the mizzen rigging, loud and clear amid the roar.

He has not called in vain. Fearless and graceful as ever, the tall, mail-clad figure of his foe leaps up upon the poop-railing, twenty feet above Amyas’s head, and shouts through his vizor :

“At your service, sir ! whosoever you may be.”

A dozen muskets and arrows are levelled at him ; but Amyas frowns them down. " No man strikes him but I. Spare him, if you kill every other soul on board. Don Guzman ! I am Captain Sir Amyas Leigh ; I proclaim you a traitor and a ravisher, and challenge you once more to single combat, when and where you will."

" You are welcome to come on board me, sir," answers the Spaniard in a clear, quiet tone ; " bringing with you this answer, that you lie in your throat " ; and lingering a moment out of bravado, to arrange his scarf, he steps slowly down again behind the bulwarks.

" Coward ! " shouts Amyas at the top of his voice.

The Spaniard re-appears instantly. " Why that name, Señor, of all others ? " asks he in a cool, stern voice.

" Because we call men cowards in England, who leave their wives to be burnt alive by priests."

The moment the words had passed Amyas's lips, he felt that they were cruel and unjust. But it was too late to recall them. The Spaniard started, clutched his sword-hilt, and then hissed back through his closed vizor:

" For that word, sirrah, you hang at my yard-arm, if Saint Mary gives me grace."

" See that your halter be a silken one, then," laughed Amyas, " for I am just dubbed knight." And he stepped down as a storm of bullets rang through the rigging round his head ; the Spaniards are not as punctilious as he.

" Fire ! " His ordnance crash through the stern-works of the Spaniard : and then he sails onward, while her balls go humming harmlessly through his rigging.

Half an hour has passed of wild noise and fury ; three times has the *Vengeance*, as a dolphin might, sailed clean round and round the *Sta Catharina*, pouring broadside after broadside, till the guns are leaping to the deck-beams with their own heat, and the Spaniard's sides are split and spotted in a hundred places. And yet, so high has been his fire in return, and so strong the deck defences

of the *Vengeance*, that a few spars broken, and two or three men wounded by musketry, are all her loss. But still the Spaniard endures, magnificent as ever ; it is the battle of the thresher and the whale ; the end is certain, but the work is long.

“ Can I help you, Captain Leigh ? ” asked Lord Henry Seymour, as he passes within oar’s length of him, to attack a ship a-head. “ The *San Matthew* has had his dinner, and is gone on to Medina to ask for a digestive to it.”

“ I thank your lordship : but this is my private quarrel, of which I spoke. But if your lordship could lend me powder——”

“ Would that I could ! But so, I fear, says every other gentleman in the fleet.”

A puff of wind clears away the sulphureous veil for a moment ; the sea is clear of ships towards the land ; the Spanish fleet are moving again up Channel, Medina bringing up the rear ; only some two miles to their right hand, the vast hull of the *San Philip* is drifting up the shore with the tide, and somewhat nearer the *San Matthew* is hard at work at her pumps. They can see the white stream of water pouring down her side.

“ Go in, my lord, and have the pair,” shouts Amyas.

“ No, sir ! Forward is a Seymour’s cry. We will leave them to pay the Flushing’s expenses.” And on went Lord Henry, and on shore went the *San Philip* at Ostend, to be plundered by the Flushings ; while the *San Matthew*, whose captain, “ on a hault courage,” had refused to save himself and his gentlemen on board Medina’s ship went blundering miserably into the hungry mouths of Captain Peter Vanderduess and four other valiant Dutchmen, who, like prudent men of Holland, contrived to keep the galleon afloat till they had emptied her, and then “ hung up her banner in the great church of Leyden, being of such a length, that being fastened to the roof, it reached unto the very ground.”

But in the meanwhile, long ere the sun had set, comes down the darkness of the thunder-storm, attracted, as to a volcano's mouth, to that vast mass of sulphur-smoke which cloaks the sea for many a mile ; and heaven's artillery above makes answer to man's below. But still, through smoke and rain, Amyas clings to his prey. She too has seen the northward movement of the Spanish fleet, and sets her topsails ; Amyas calls to the men to fire high, and cripple her rigging : but in vain : for three or four belated galleys, having forced their way at last over the shallows, come flashing and sputtering up to the combatants, and take his fire off the galleon. Amyas grinds his teeth, and would fain hustle into the thick of the press once more, in spite of the galleys' beaks.

"Most heroical captain," says Cary, pulling a long face ; "if we do, we are stove and sunk in five minutes ; not to mention that Yeo says he has not twenty rounds of great cartridge left."

So, surely and silent, the *Vengeance* sheers off, but keeps as near as she can to the little squadron, all through the night of rain and thunder which follows. Next morning the sun rises on a clear sky, with a strong west-north-west breeze, and all hearts are asking what the day will bring forth.

They are long past Dunkirk now ; the German Ocean is opening before them. The Spaniards, sorely battered, and lessened in numbers, have, during the night, regained some sort of order. The English hang on their skirts a mile or two behind. They have no ammunition, and must wait for more. To Amyas's great disgust, the *Sta Catharina* has rejoined her fellows during the night.

"Never mind," says Cary ; "she can neither dive nor fly, and as long as she is above water, we—What is the Admiral about ?"

He is signalling Lord Henry Seymour and his squadron. Soon they tack, and come down the wind for the coast

of Flanders. Parma must be blockaded still ; and the Hollanders are likely to be too busy with their plunder to do it effectually. Suddenly there is a stir in the Spanish fleet. Medina and the rearmost ships turn upon the English. What can it mean ? Will they offer battle once more ? If so, it were best to get out of their way, for we have nothing wherewith to fight them. So the English lie close to the wind. They will let them pass, and return to their old tactic of following and harassing.

“ Good-bye to Seymour,” says Cary, “ if he is caught between them and Parma’s flotilla. They are going to Dunkirk.”

“ Impossible ! They will not have water enough to reach his light craft. Here comes a big ship right upon us ! Give him all you have left, lads ; and if he will fight us, lay him alongside, and die boarding.”

They gave him what they had, and hulled him with every shot ; but his huge side stood silent as the grave. He had not wherewithal to return the compliment.

“ As I live, he is cutting loose the foot of his main sail ! the villain means to run.”

“ There go the rest of them ! Victoria ! ” shouted Cary, as one after another, every Spaniard set all the sail he could.

There was silence for a few minutes throughout the English fleet ; and then cheer upon cheer of triumph rent the skies. It was over. The Spaniard had refused battle, and thinking only of safety, was pressing downward toward the Straits again. The Invincible Armada had cast away its name, and England was saved.

“ But he will never get there, sir,” said old Yeo, who had come upon deck to murmur his *Nunc Domine*, and gaze upon that sight beyond all human faith or hope : “ Never, never will he weather the Flanders shore, against such a breeze as is coming up. Look to the eye of the wind, sir, and see how the Lord is fighting for His people ! ”

Yes, down it came, fresher and stiffer every minute out of the grey north-west, as it does so often after a thunder-storm ; and the sea began to rise high and white under the "Claro Aquilone," till the Spaniards were fain to take in all spare canvas, and lie-to as best they could ; while the English fleet, lying-to also, awaited an event which was in God's hands and not in theirs.

"They will be all ashore on Zealand before the afternoon," murmured Amyas ; "and I have lost my labour ! Oh, for powder, powder, powder ! to go in and finish it at once !"

"Oh, sir," said Yeo, "don't murmur against the Lord in the very day of His mercies. It is hard, to be sure ; but His will be done."

"Could we not borrow powder from Drake there ?"

"Look at the sea, sir !"

And, indeed, the sea was far too rough for any such attempt. The Spaniards neared and neared the fatal dunes, which fringed the shore for many a dreary mile ; and Amyas had to wait weary hours, growling like a dog who has had the bone snatched out of his mouth, till the day wore on ; when, behold, the wind began to fall as rapidly as it had risen. A savage joy rose in Amyas's heart.

"They are safe ! safe for us ! Who will go and beg us powder ? A cartridge here and a cartridge there ?—anything to set to work again !"

Cary volunteered, and returned in a couple of hours with some quantity : but he was on board again only just in time, for the south-wester had recovered the mastery of the skies, and Spaniards and English were moving away ; but this time northward. Whither now ? To Scotland ? Amyas knew not, and cared not, provided he was in the company of Don Guzman de Soto.

The Armada was defeated, and England saved.

From "Westward Ho !"

THE WHITE KING

G. J. WHYTE-MELVILLE

ELIZABETH died and the Stuarts succeeded. Soon two causes of quarrel arose. Should the stricter Protestants, or Puritans, be allowed to remain in the Church of England? The King was against them. Who should have the power to raise taxes? King or Parliament? The quarrels developed under James I and his son Charles I, until the Commons took up arms against the King and civil war raged. Matters were much more complicated than this, but you must consult your history for the details, and for an account of the progress of the war. Eventually Charles surrendered and was brought to trial. However much you sympathize with the unfortunate King, remember that there are two sides to every question, and that this is one of the great steps by which Englishmen gained freedom from tyranny.

We have now reached the middle of the seventeenth century.

It was the 29th of January, and Lieutenant-General Cromwell's leisure was not likely to be at the disposal of the first comer; nevertheless the sentry at his door made room for Effingham to pass with a military salute, and after a very brief interval of waiting in an ante-room, a pale and agitated secretary ushered George into the presence of the Lieutenant-General, with a grave apology that so distinguished a servant of the Parliament should be kept in attendance even for a few minutes.

Cromwell was standing in the middle of the room, attired with his usual plain simplicity, but somewhat more carefully than his wont. The pale secretary reseated himself after the entrance of Effingham, and continued his occupation of writing from the Lieutenant-General's dictation, but his hand was so unsteady that it shook even the massive table on which he leaned his arm. His master took a short turn or two up and down the room, and for some minutes did not appear to notice the new arrival. George had time to scan him minutely. He had been familiar with him for a long period, had watched him in many an emergency of difficulty and danger, yet had he never seen him quite like what he was now.

In the turmoil of battle, in the critical moments on which his own destiny and that of England depended, it was a part of the man to become cooler and cooler as the plot thickened. His cheek would glow and his eye would brighten when leading the Ironsides to a successful charge ; but should their advance be checked and the scales of victory hang doubtful in the balance, those plain heavy features seemed to settle into lineaments of iron. Now, though the orders he was enunciating were but trifling matters of military detail, a faint sallow flush came and went over his countenance, and the large lips twitched and trembled, while the broad jaw beneath them closed ever and anon with a convulsive clasp. He seemed to speak mechanically, and with his thoughts fixed on some topic far distant from the strategical movements he was directing, and he started—positively started—when in one of his short restless turns he encountered George Effingham.

There were but those three in the room—the pale secretary bowing his head over his writing ; the Parliamentary officer loftily confronting his chief ; and the Dictator himself, hiding an air of remorse, irritation, and perplexity under an assumption of more than military brevity and decision.

"What would you," demanded Cromwell, his brow darkening as, with the perspicuity of all great men, he read Effingham's face like a book—"what would you with us in this press of business? Be brief, for the time is short, and lo! even now the hour is at hand."

"I come to resign my commission into your Excellency's hands," answered Effingham in slow, steady tones, emphatic as they were sorrowful. "I come to demand my dismissal from your Excellency's service. I come to protest against the murder of Charles Stuart."

Cromwell's brow had grown darker and darker as the officer went on; but when he reached his climax, all the wrath he had so long repressed, all the accumulated feelings of self-reproach which had burdened him for days, broke forth in a burst of incontrollable fury. His face became purple, his features swelled, and his eyes glowed like coals, as, with a shout that made the pale secretary start out of his chair, he thundered forth—

"Out upon you, George Effingham! vile traitor and doubly-dyed renegade—will you put your hand to the plough and dare now to look back? Will you come into the Lord's vineyard, and shrink like a coward from your share of the work? God do so to me and more also if I lay not your head as low before evensong as that of Charles Stuart will lie to-morrow, to spare whom I take heaven to witness I would give my right arm—yea, the very apple of mine eye!"

George had nerve as well as courage. He remained perfectly calm and erect during this outbreak, and at its conclusion repeated, in tones if possible more distinct and accusatory than before, "I protest against the murder of Charles Stuart!"

We have already said that a stern daring akin to his own never failed to touch the keystone of Cromwell's character. His wrath abated as rapidly as it had risen. With the inevitable self-deception of all who would fain stretch

conscience too far, he was willing to vindicate his actions to his subordinate, though he felt he could not justify them to himself. Perhaps something within told him that, had he been in Effingham's position, he would have acted in the same manner.

"Nay, I do wrong thus to chafe that thou art still in darkness," said he, with a strong effort at composure, and a countenance paling rapidly now that his natural violence of temper had expended itself. "Thou art a tried comrade, Effingham, and a fellow-labourer in the good work; yet it may be that thine eyes have not been opened, and thou canst not see the hand of the Lord in our dealings with this man of blood. I would not be hasty with thee, my trusty friend. Take back thy resignation, and forget that thou hast thus bearded one of the Lord's appointed servants in the execution of his work."

Cromwell turned to his secretary as if to continue the previous employment which Effingham's presence had interrupted, and made as though the subject was now concluded between them; but George was not to be thus put off. Eyeing the Lieutenant-General gravely and sternly, he once more placed his written resignation in his hands.

"I will no longer serve," said he, "with those who set at nought the Divine ordinance, and dip their hands in blood for the security of their temporal power. How shall I answer at the Great Day when the life of Charles Stuart, king though he be, is required at my hands, and I stand convicted of aiding and abetting in his murder—ay, his murder, General Cromwell, of whom the Scripture itself hath said, 'Touch not mine Anointed?' How wilt thou answer for it thyself *there*, who canst not give an account of it that shall satisfy mankind even *here*?"

Cromwell paced the room with rapid and irregular strides, his hands folded together, and the fingers entwining each other as of one in the extreme of perplexity. His

features worked and trembled with the conflict of his emotions, and his breath came short and quick as he muttered out his vindication partly to himself and partly to the brave captain, whose defiance he could not but admire.

"It is not for me to answer it—surely not only for *me* ! Do I stand alone amongst the people of England ? Am I at once accuser, judge, and executioner in my own person ? By the verdict of sixty just men ; by the decree of a nation pronounced through its Parliament ; by the laws of God and man—the head of the unrighteous hath been doomed to fall, and shall I alone be called to give account for it here and hereafter ? And yet can you divide blood-guiltiness by figures, and mete out the portions of crime as one meteth out corn in a bushel ? Nay, it is a just decree, and by its justice must we stand or fall—Council and Commons, Peers and Parliament, down to the meanest trooper of the army—and let none shrink from his share of the great work in which all are alike bound to take a part."

"You can save him if you will," said Effingham, fixing his eye calmly on the agitated countenance of his powerful superior, the pale secretary looking at the pleader the while as one who watches a man placing his head voluntarily in the lion's maw.

"None can save him now," answered Cromwell in grave, prophetic tones, "but He in whose hands are the issues of life and death. What am I but a sword in the grasp of the slayer—an instrument forged to do the bidding of the saints, the despised and jeered saints, that have yet triumphed in despite of their enemies ? Albeit the lowest and the humblest in that goodly communion, I will not flinch from the duty that wiser and holier men than I have set me to perform. 'It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.' Enough of this, George Effingham—thou in whom I have trusted, who wert to me even as a brother, go out from among us,

if it must be so, lest a worse thing befall thee. He that is not with us is against us. Go out from among us, George Effingham, false and unprofitable servant ! Begone and see my face no more."

Cromwell turned from him angrily and abruptly. He had lashed himself into wrath again, and the imploring looks of the secretary warned Effingham to withdraw. He placed his resignation on the table, and keeping his eye on Cromwell, whose averted face and troubled gestures betrayed the storm within, walked steadily from the room. As he reached the door, the Lieutenant-General was heard to mutter, " It is the Lord's doings ! It is the atonement of blood ! "

The Council were already assembled in the Painted Chamber, and were waiting but for him who was indeed as their very right arm and the breath of their nostrils. While Effingham walked home afoot, a ruined, and in the eyes of his own world a degraded man, Lieutenant-General Cromwell stepped from his coach amidst the clang of arms and the deferential stare of the populace, the most powerful individual in England. Which of the two looked back on the 29th of January with the most tranquil heart ?

But the future Lord Protector was by this time fully nerved for the stern measures he had undertaken to carry out. If his conscience told him that the life of Charles Stuart would be required at his hands, was not the iron will powerful enough to stifle the still small voice ? Could not Ambition and Fanaticism, the ambition that had originated in Patriotism, the Fanaticism that had once been piety, march hand-in-hand to their triumph, calling themselves Duty and Necessity ? Was Cromwell the first who ever forced himself to believe that honour and interest pointed to the same path, or the only man who has persuaded himself he was a tool in the hands of the Almighty whilst he was doing the devil's work ? Saint or hypocrite, patriot or usurper—perhaps a mixture of all—can we judge of his

temptations or realise to ourselves the extremity to which he found himself reduced ? Sacrilege or justice, crime or duty, he went about it with a bold brow and a steady hand.

Small deliberation did they hold, those gloomy men who met in the Painted Chamber. Their nerves were strung, their minds made up, they had even leisure to trifle with their awful task ; and the ink that was to witness the shedding of the king's blood was flirted from one to another in ghastly mockery of sport. The DEATH WARRANT lay before them, the merciless document that pronounced " Charles Stuart, King of England, to stand convicted, attainted, and condemned of high treason, and other high crimes " ; that sentenced him " To be put to death by the severing of his head from his body, of which sentence execution yet remaineth to be done. These are therefore to will and require you to see the said sentence executed in the open street before Whitehall upon the morrow, being the thirtieth day of this instant month of January, between the hours of ten in the morning and five in the afternoon, with full effect. And for so doing this shall be your warrant.

" And these are to require all officers and soldiers, and others the good people of this nation of England, to be assisting unto you in this service. Given under our hands and seals."

And then they signed their names in full, thus :

" JOHN BRADSHAW

" THOMAS GREY, LORD GROBY

" OLIVER CROMWELL "

(And fifty-six others.)

And the third signature was written in the steadiest hand amongst them all.

Charles Stuart's last day was come. He had undergone his trial with a dignity and calmness which many attributed

to his conviction that even at the last the Parliament dare not proceed to extremities, that at least the *person* of a sovereign must always be respected in England. If such was the reed on which he leaned, he must have found it broken in his hand. If he had cherished any expectations of a reprieve or commutation of his sentence, had been deceived by any of those visions which are so apt to take the place of Hope when Hope herself is stricken to the earth, he must have seen them now completely cleared away ; and yet his courage never failed him. The King was as composed, as gentle, as majestic, in his warded chamber at St James's on that bitter 29th of January, as though he had been the most powerful monarch in Europe seated triumphantly on a throne.

In the ante-room of the prisoner's apartment was stationed a guard of Hacker's musketeers : rough, careless soldiers were they, opposed to royalty both from interest and inclination ; and yet, now that the sentence was passed, now that the prisoner whom they guarded was no longer a monarch on his trial, but a human soul that would be in eternity to-morrow, their boisterous jests were checked, their rude voices hushed, and all appeared to feel alike the influence of that majesty with which the King of Terrors clothes him whom he is about to visit.

One amongst them, indeed, seemed more restless than his comrades. Henry Brampton, with his dark face and flaxen curls, had omitted no opportunity of approaching the prisoner ; and yet even now the last hour was almost come, and his duty had not yet brought him in immediate contact with Charles's person. The suspense was getting absolutely maddening ; and the disguised Cavalier's feelings, outraged and lacerated by the sufferings he saw his sovereign compelled to undergo, worked upon him to a degree that it cost him all the efforts of which he was capable to hide from the observation of his companions.

Brampton had laid his plans with the energy and decision

of his character. For weeks he had been ingratiating himself with the more dissolute and desperate men in the company to which he belonged. He had prayed with them, preached with them, jested with them, and, above all, drank with them, till he could count some dozen or so of choice spirits with whom he felt his influence to be all-powerful. These he had sounded cautiously and by degrees. Like most men with nothing to lose, he had found them totally without fixed principles, and perfectly ready for any undertaking which promised to conduce to their own advantage. Without committing himself to any one of them, or letting them into his confidence, he had given them to understand that he meditated some bold stroke at a fitting opportunity, in which he counted upon their adhesion, and which, if successful, would render them independent of military service for life, and give them wherewith to drink to their hearts' content for the rest of their days.

These myrmidons he had contrived with infinite pains to unite in one squad, or division, which generally went on guard together, and which formed in rotation the escort of his Majesty. Could he but depend upon them at the important moment, a plan for the King's escape was practicable. Relays of horses were ready at all hours to carry his Majesty to the coast ; and if the fidelity of his guards could once be seduced, it would be no impossibility to hurry him out of St James's, and away to a place of safety under cover of night. Two obstacles stood in the way of the dauntless Cavalier. The first was so to arrange as that this escort, and no other, should guard him during the hours of darkness, a difficulty which appeared at length to be overcome, as they had been told off for duty this very evening ; the second, to apprise the King of his intentions, no easy matter, guarded as was the royal prisoner, every word scrupulously noted, and every action rigidly watched.

The great stake must be played out to-day. To-morrow it would be too late ; and Brampton's manifest restlessness and perturbation began to excite the remarks of his reckless companions.

"Thy conscience pricks thee, Henry," said one rude musketeer. "Overboard with it, man ! as thou didst with the Dons yonder on the Spanish Main."

"Nay," quoth another, "the time hath come at last ; and Brampton's plot, whatever it be, is about hatching just now."

"Well, I for one am tired of doing nothing," observed a third. "Have with thee, lad, be it to rob a church or to skin a bishop !"

"Or to put Fairfax in irons," said a fourth.

"Or to take the New Jerusalem by escalade. Hurrah ! for three hours' plunder of those streets, my boys, after the storm," shouted a fifth. They were ripe for anything now, and the 'hurrah !' was re-echoed more than once through the guard-room, when the last speaker, the wildest reprobate amongst them all, raised his hand with a warning gesture, and a wistful look upon his dissipated war-worn face. "Hush, lads !" he said, in a hoarse whisper ! and whilst he spoke the guard-room became still as death. "Hush, for pity's sake. His children are going in to him even now. God help them, poor things ! I've got young ones of my own !"

There was a tear on more than one shaggy eyelash, as the Princess Elizabeth and her little brother, the infant Duke of Gloucester, were led by faithful Herbert through the guard-room, to see their father for the last time on this side the grave.

Charles sat at a small table on which lay a Bible, a work of controversial divinity—for even at this extreme hour he could not take his religion pure from the fountain-head—and a casket containing a few small diamond ornaments and other jewels.

This casket had been sent to him the night before, in return for a signet-ring which he had forwarded to its guardian as a voucher, and had been religiously kept by that custodian, the Lady Wheeler, until such time as the King's necessities should force him to ask for it. Its contents were scarcely of royal value, being but a few dilapidated 'Georges' and 'Garters'; but as they lay spread out upon the table before him, they constituted all the worldly possessions left to Charles Stuart.

He was looking at them wistfully, and with a sad pensive expression on his brow. Many a gorgeous scene did those glittering toys recall, many an hour of royal state and courtly splendour when he who was now a prisoner waiting for his doom needed but to lift his hand to bid the proudest heads in England bend lowly before him, when he was the centre of that charmed circle which numbered in its ranks the flower of the noblest aristocracy in the world, now, alas ! scattered, exiled, ruined, and destroyed—when he was the first personage in its peerage, the first knight in its chivalry, the powerful sovereign, the happy husband, the lawgiver, the benefactor, the fountain-head of honour, and wealth, and renown. Where had it all fled ? Could those times have ever been real ? or was it not some vision that had melted dreamily away ? Alas ! those broken ornaments typified too truly the broken fortunes of him who now gazed on them for the last time. It is said that on the near approach of death, especially a death of violence undergone while body and mind are still untouched by decay, the whole of a man's life passes before him like a pageant. What a strange eventful pageant must it have been that thus glided across the spiritual vision of the doomed King ! His careless boyhood, his indulgent father's kindly smile and awkward ungainly form ; the romantic expedition to Madrid, the gorgeous feasts, the tournaments and bull-fights of chivalrous old Spain ; the face of Buckingham, beautiful exceedingly, and the sparkling smile of his own

young Bourbon bride ; the assemboled Parliaments, a royal figure standing out in relief as that of one with whom he was not personally identified, calling them together and proroguing them at will ; Laud's stately bearing, Hampden's goodly presence, respectful even in defiance, and scapegoat Strafford's pale reproachful smile ; then the Scotch progress, and the magnificence of Newcastle's princely hospitality, the unfurling of the standard, the marches and counter-marches of civil warfare ; the Court at Oxford, with its narrowing circle of the loyal and true, stanch Ormond's noble brow, hot Rupert's towering form, Goring's long love-locks, and stout old Astley's honest war-worn face ; then the midnight bivouac and the morning alarm, the sweeping charge, the thrilling war-cry, the shattered rout of Naseby's fatal field ; a prisoner, still a king, at Holmby House, Hampton Court, Carisbrooke Castle, Windsor itself ; the poor bird beating its wings more and more hopelessly against the bars of each successive cage ; to end in Bradshaw's pitiless frown and the final sentence read out to consenting hundreds in Westminster Hall. Ay, it *was* reality, after all, else why this sombre apartment, with its barred doors and lofty window-sills ? why the sad faces of his few personal attendants ? why the rude oath and jest and clang of arms in the adjoining guard-room ? above all, why the chill dull foreboding, creeping and curdling even round *his* brave heart, the stunned consciousness that *to-morrow* he must be in another world.

It is a splendid pageant, truly, that of a king's life ; yet perhaps at the extreme hour its scenes appear no whit more important, no whit more satisfactory to look back upon, than those which flit through the brain of a beggar, laying him down to die homeless by the wayside.

It was pitiful to see the children as they came gently into their father's presence. On each little face there was a dim prescience of evil ; a dread of something felt but

not understood—fear for themselves, sorrow for him, although they knew not why, mingled with childish wonderment, not altogether painful, and interest, and awe.

Charles had need of all his fortitude now. He took the Princess lovingly on his knee, and the child looked up wistfully and fondly in his face. Something that crossed it caused her to burst out a-crying, and she hid her wet cheek on her father's shoulder in a passion of tears. Her little brother, frightened at her distress, wept plentifully for company. The rough soldiers in the guard-room had rather have fronted the King's culverins at point-blank distance, than entered that chamber sanctified by sorrow. They herded together as far as might be from the door, and if they exchanged words it was not above their breath.

The King took his few diamond ornaments from the table.

"My children," said he, "behold all the wealth I have it now in my power to give you."

With that he placed the gauds in their little hands, reserving only a 'George,' cut in an onyx and set with diamonds, the which he wore on his breast like a true knight, as he walked steadfastly to death on the morrow.

Then he blessed them with a father's blessing. "My children," said Charles, "I shall be with you no more: you will never again see your earthly father in this world. But you have a Father in Heaven of whom none can rob you. To Him I commend you—to Him I bid you commend yourselves. Observe your duty to the Queen your mother. Swerve never in your loyalty to the Prince your brother, who is, and who always must be, my rightful successor. Fear not the face of man; fear only to do evil in the sight of Heaven. Farewell, my children! Be comforted, and farewell!"

Then lifting his little son upon his knee, a boy that could scarce speak plain, he bade him for the love of his father never to supplant either of his brothers; never to believe

that he could be a rightful sovereign while they lived ; never to allow wicked designing men to tempt him to the throne ; and the little one understood him, and kindled as he spoke, lisping out that he never would—

“ I will be torn in pieces first ! ” said the sturdy child. So he dismissed them ; and calling them back once more folded them in one long parting embrace, and blessed them for the last time. Then he turned away to the window ; and when the door closed upon them it seemed to him that the bitterness of death was past.

Good Bishop Juxon was then admitted to the Royal presence, and Charles Stuart’s last evening on earth was passed in penitence and trustful prayer.

Henry Brampton’s suspense was becoming too painful to endure ; but the welcome order came at last, and our Cavalier found himself once more on the eve of one of those desperate enterprises in which it was his destiny to be continually engaged ; in which, indeed, only he seemed now to live. Personal danger had for long been a stimulant of which he could ill forego the use, and it had become his normal existence to work in a perpetual plot on the King’s behalf.

With a brutality which was hardly characteristic even of that stern commandant, Hacker had issued an order that two musketeers should remain in the prisoner’s chamber the whole night previous to his execution ; and it was with a deep, thrilling sense of triumph that Brampton heard his assumed name read out by the corporal of the guard as selected for this otherwise unwelcome duty. As he ran over in his own mind the arrangements he had completed—the adherents on whom he could calculate as sufficiently numerous to overpower any refractory sentinel ; the coach which was in waiting night after night, on some pretext or another, in the Mall ; the relays of the best horses then in England, furnished from many a nobleman’s and gentleman’s stable, stationed at short intervals

along a direct and unfrequented cross-country road to the coast ; the raking corvette, that stood off and on from an obscure seaport during the day, and coming into harbour at night, was kept ready at any hour to trip her anchor, shake out her topsail, and fair wind or foul, beat out to sea ; the disguise prepared for the well-known person of the King ; nay, the very papers which should vouch for his assumed character in case he were stopped at any of the numerous armed posts pervading the country, and for which friends in high places had actually procured the impression of the new Parliamentary seal, with the English arms and the Irish harp, and the inscription, " In the first year of freedom, by God's blessing restored " ;—as he ran over all these well-assorted arrangements in his mind, he felt that the moment could no longer be delayed, and that now or never he must make proof of the inferior instruments with the assistance of which his plan must necessarily be carried out.

One by one he sounded them in different corners of the guard-room ; one by one he found them, as he had anticipated, men ready to undertake any measure, however desperate, for an adequate consideration. All of them loved adventure for its own sake ; none of them were inaccessible to a bribe.

There was something about Brampton, too, that made its way rapidly with *men* ; a certain womanly kindness which—joined to obvious daring and reckless contempt for consequences, has an unspeakable charm for the grosser sex—had invested him with a high degree of interest in those untutored minds ; and the stories they told each other of his miraculous adventures and romantic crimes on the Spanish Main and elsewhere—stories which originated solely in their own imaginations—had surrounded him with a halo of renown and mystery by which they were completely dazzled. He was not slow to take advantage of this spurious fascination. Singly and collec-

tively he bound them by an oath to do his bidding, whatever it might be, for that one night ; and pledged himself equally solemnly to endow them severally with sums which, to private soldiers, represented unheard-of affluence on the morrow. His own patrimony was well-nigh exhausted, it is true, but the King's adherents had not yet been completely rooted out of the land. Broken, dispersed, sequestered, ruined as was the Cavalier party, he had no fear that the money would not be forthcoming. When Brampton belted on his bandoliers and shouldered his musket to take his post in the King's bedroom, his heart bounded under his buff-coat to think that at last he had saved his Sovereign.

Good Bishop Juxon had taken leave of his beloved master for the night ; faithful Herbert had prepared the pallet on which, as an act of especial favour to the prisoner, he was permitted to repose by the King's bedside. Charles had completed his usual devotions, and had busied himself in the observance of all the accustomed *minutiæ* of his toilet, as though it were but one of the many ordinary evenings which lead up surely and successively to the last. When he was ready to undress he seemed to indulge in a short interval of contemplative repose—calm, resigned, nay, even hopeful, like a man who is about to undertake a journey on which he has long speculated, and for which, now that his departure is near at hand, he has neither repugnance nor fear. Herbert busied himself about divers matters in the chamber, to hide his troubled countenance and overflowing eyes, which the King observing, spoke to him cheerfully and with a smile, bidding him rouse himself at an early hour on the following morning, “ for,” said Charles, “ I must be astir betimes ; I have a great work to do to-morrow.”

The attached servant's fortitude here gave way completely, and clasping his master's hand to his bosom, he burst into a passion of grief.

“ Nay,” said the King, “ be comforted ; to-morrow is a

day of rejoicing rather than of sorrow. Is it not my second marriage-day ? To-morrow I would be as trim as may be, for before night I hope to be espoused to my blessed Jesus."

For even now, on the verge of eternity, trifling matters wrested their share of attention from the grief of the one and the preoccupation of the other. Herbert asked his master what clothes he would be pleased to wear on the morrow, and the warrior-spirit of the old English kings flashed up for the last time, tempered, but not extinguished, by the resignation of the Christian—

"Let me have a shirt on more than ordinary," said Charles, "by reason the season is so sharp as may probably make me shake, which some observers will imagine proceeds from fear. I would have no such imputation. I fear not death ; death is not terrible to me. I bless my God I am prepared !" These last words the King uttered in a low, devout, and solemn tone. He had done with everything now, on this side of eternity.

Yet is life passing sweet, even to him who has most manned himself for its loss ; and one more trial was in store for the prisoner ere the gates of earthly hope were closed upon him for ever. A loud knock was heard at the door of his apartment, and without waiting for permission to enter, a file of musketeers marched steadily into the room, and stationed themselves one on each side of the King's couch.

In vain Herbert stormed and expostulated ; in vain he threatened the vengeance of the Colonel, the General, the Council, and the Parliament : the soldiers had their orders, they said ; and the King, calming his servant's indignation, gently bade him be still and submit with patience, as he did himself, to this last indignity.

One of the musketeers seemed stupefied with drink, as was indeed the case, and remained like a statue on his post ; but the door had scarcely closed upon the stir and

clang of the guard-room ere the other, flinging his musket on the floor, was prostrate at the King's feet, covering his hand with kisses, and pouring forth expressions of loyalty and devotion such as the Sovereign had not heard for many a long month. Despite the flaxen curls and the dyed skin, the King recognised him at once ; and to the Cavalier's hurried entreaties that he would save himself, as he poured forth a torrent of explanations and adjurations that not an instant was to be lost, did but reply—

“ It was like thee, Humphrey Bosville, bold, gallant heart !—loyal to the last. It is no fault of thine that Charles Stuart must wear no more an earthly crown. But it is not to be. Listen, good Bosville ; already they are changing the guard in the ante-room. Thy plot hath failed thee even at the eleventh hour. God grant they may not have suspected thee and thy comrades. Surely, ere this time to-morrow enough blood will have been shed. Fare thee well for ever, my truest, bravest servant. It is the will of God—God's will be done ! ”

It was indeed too true. The last chance had failed, like all the rest. No sooner had Lieutenant-General Cromwell been informed of Hacker's directions that the prisoner's last hours should be subject to intrusion, than he rescinded the brutal order ; but the practised warrior at the same time commanded that the guard in the ante-room should be relieved every four hours, and that the same men should not be warned twice for this duty until after the execution—thus nullifying any attempt at tampering with the soldiers' fidelity, unless the seducer was prepared to corrupt the whole regiment.

Humphrey had but time to resume his arms and his soldierlike attitude, when he was recalled to his comrades in the ante-room, and with them marched back to his regimental quarters. He carried off with him, however, one of the King's gloves, which Charles, with his accustomed kindness in trifles, had taken from the table and slipped into

his hand as he bade him farewell. That glove was treasured by Bosville's descendants as the most precious relic of their house.

At roll-call on the following morning some dozen or so of Hacker's musketeers were missing. Amongst the deserters was one Henry Brampton, of whom no further intelligence was ever obtained, though, unlike the rest, he had left his buff-coat, his arms and accoutrements, for the benefit of his successor in the ranks.

With grave and doubting looks the people in the streets asked each other if it would really be? In twos and threes, and small distinct groups, they conversed in low tones, glancing anxiously now towards St James's, now in the direction of Whitehall. No crowd was collected, no circulation stopped. Ere a knot of persons, gathering like a snowball, could exceed a score, they found themselves insensibly dispersed and moving on. Compact bodies of soldiers, horse and foot, paraded to and fro in all directions, while St James's Park was lined with a double row of musketeers, in review order, their drums beating, their colours flying, and their ranks opened. Officers and men wore a grave determined air; there was little of triumph, much of sorrow, in their honest English faces. The day had broken gloomily enough—not a ray of sunshine lighted the lowering sky. The wind swept up the streets and across the open Mall in moaning fitful gusts, and it was bitter cold. Masons had been knocking and scraping all night long at the wall of the banqueting-house in Whitehall, and carpenters in paper caps had concluded their work in front of the King's palace. The multitude looked up at that solemn fabric with a dull stupefied air. It was the scaffold.

One man amongst the crowd in St James's Park, habited in the dress of a plain country gentleman, and muffled in a sombre-coloured cloak, was recognised by several of the

officers and men on duty. They would have accosted him, but he shunned all their greetings, and exchanged not a word with any of them. His countenance bore the impress of a deep sadness and contrition ; his very gait was that of one who is bowed down by sorrow and remorse. Though he had thrown up his part, George Effingham had come to see the end of the tragedy played out.

The moments seemed to move like lead to the expectant thousands ; perhaps to one they passed more swiftly, perhaps even he could have wished the agony of expectation were over at last.

Many a false alarm, many a stir about St James's, caused every head to turn in that direction ; but the drums beat up at last, the colours flew once more out, the long line of soldiers brought their firelocks to the ' shoulder,' and in the open space between their ranks a small group of persons moved slowly, solemnly, steadily, towards the place of doom.

The good Bishop on his right hand trembled like a leaf. Herbert's face was blanched and swollen with weeping ; even the Parliamentary Colonel who attended him, drilled soldier though he was, marched not with so firm a step as he.

Ay, look at him well, George Effingham ; you have not been so near him since he reviewed your squadron on the eve of Newbury ; was his eye brighter, his mien more stately when he sat his charger, in mail and plate, before your drawn swords, than it is now ? Look at him well ; would you ever have deserted his service had you thought it would come to this ?

As the King passed on, the musketeers on either side wheeled up behind him, closing in their ranks and forming an impassable barrier to the multitude in their rear. By favour of a stalwart sergeant who had served in his own stand of pikes at Naseby, Effingham was permitted to advance with this unbroken column. An inexpressible

fascination compelled him to see out the end of that which his very soul abhorred.

On arriving at Whitehall, his Majesty passed along the galleries to his bedchamber, where he halted for a while to take a short interval of repose. Here he was served with a morsel of bread and a goblet of claret wine, upon a silver salver. Charles broke off a corner of the manchet and drank from the cup. Herbert meanwhile gave to the Bishop a white satin cap which he had in readiness for his master ; he could not endure to see him under the axe of the executioner.

It was now time. Colonel Hacker, who was in attendance, and on whose stern nature the patience and dignity of the royal sufferer had made no slight impression, knocked respectfully at the chamber door. It was the signal of leave-taking. Herbert and the Bishop sank on their knees before their Sovereign, covering his hand with kisses. The latter, old and infirm, bowed down moreover with excessive grief, had scarcely strength to rise again. Gentle and kindly to the last, Charles helped the prelate up with his own hand. He bade the door be opened, and followed the Colonel out with the free step and the majestic bearing of an English King.

The galleries and banqueting-house were lined with soldiers. Firm and unwavering, they stood upon their posts, but those warlike faces bore an expression of unusual dejection : glances of pity, changing fast to admiration and even reverence, were cast upon the King from under their steel head-pieces, and the duty was evidently little to the minds of those frank bold men. They had confronted him in battle, they had fought him, and beaten him, and reviled him, but they had never thought it was to end like this !

Men and women crowded in behind them, peering and peeping under their elbows and between their heads at the doomed monarch. Fervent expressions of loyalty and

goodwill greeted him from these bystanders, expressions not rebuked, nay, sometimes even echoed, by the very guards who kept them back.

“God bless your Majesty!” exclaimed George Effingham, in loud, fearless tones, baring his head at the same time with studied reverence.

The blessing was caught up and repeated by many a broken voice, and the King, returning his salutation, looked his old officer kindly and steadily in the face. Whether he recognised him or not, George was the happier for that glance during his lifetime.

He would fain have remained near him now, would fain have done him homage and returned to his allegiance even at the block, but the press became more and more resistless, and he was swept away by the crowd to a distance from which he could with difficulty watch the last actions and catch the last words of the King against whom he had rebelled.

He saw him emerge upon the fatal platform with the same dignified bearing, the same firm step. He saw him expostulate for an instant with those around him as he asked for a higher block, that he might not stoop lower than became a Stuart even in his death. He could see, though he could not hear, that the King was speaking with animated gestures in vindication of his conduct throughout the war; but the royal voice rose audibly with the last sentence it ever spoke on earth, and every syllable struck loud and distinct as a trumpet-blast, while it declared in the face of earth and heaven—

“I have a good cause—I have a gracious God, and I will say no more!”

Had Effingham lived to a hundred, he could never have forgotten the picture that was then stamped indelibly on his brain. For many a year after he never shut his eyes that it did not present itself in all the firm strokes and glowing colours of reality. The sea of white faces upturned

and horror bound, as the face of one man—the spars and props of the scaffold—the little groups that broke its level line—the sparrow that flitted across his vision and diverted his eye and his thoughts for an instant even then—the Bishop's white rochet and the Parliamentary Colonel's burnished helmet—the masked headsman's gigantic figure and the clean sharp outline of the axe—the satin doublet and the veiled head bowed down upon the block—the outstretched hand that gave the signal—

From "Holmby House"

SLAUGHTER IN THE MARSHES

R. D. BLACKMORE

AFTER the death of Charles I Oliver Cromwell tried to rule with the help of Parliament, but he soon found that it was a hindrance to capable government and he became Lord Protector. Though he made the name of England respected throughout the world, he did not succeed in establishing a lasting rule, and not long after his death Charles II was recalled. During the twenty-five years of Charles II's reign there was much political and religious strife, and two great parties came into being—the Tories (the Court party) and the Whigs (the Country party). At the end of the reign the Tories had the upper hand, and Charles was cunningly re-establishing royal power when he died, and his Roman Catholic brother, James, came to the throne. Hence the foolish rebellion of Monmouth, who thought that Protestants would rally to his cause. *Lorna Doone*, from which this story of the failure of the rebellion is taken, should be read for its charm as a tale of romantic adventure.

WHEN my poor mother heard that I was committed, by word of honour, to a wild-goose chase, among the rebels, after that runagate Tom Faggus, she simply stared, and would not believe it. At last, however, we convinced her that I was in earnest, and must be off in the early morning, and leave John Fry with the hay crop.

Therefore I took good Kickums, who (although with

one eye spoiled) was worth ten sweet-tempered horses, to a man who knew how to manage him ; and being well charged both with bacon and powder, forth I set on my wild-goose chase.

There was one thing rather unfavourable to my present enterprise, namely, that I knew nothing of the country I was bound to, nor even in what part of it my business might be supposed to lie. For beside the uncertainty caused by the conflict of reports, it was likely that King Monmouth's army would be moving from place to place, according to the prospect of supplies and of reinforcements. However there would arise more chance of getting news as I went on.

But the manner in which I was bandied about, by false information, from pillar to post, or at other times driven quite out of my way by the presence of the King's soldiers, may be known by the names of the following towns, to which I was sent in succession, Bath, Frome, Wells, Wincanton, Glastonbury, Shepton, Bradford, Axbridge, Somerton, and Bridgwater.

This last place I reached on a Sunday night, the fourth or fifth of July, I think—or it might be the sixth, for that matter ; inasmuch as I had been too much worried to get the day of the month at church. Only I know that my horse and myself were glad to come to a decent place, where meat, and corn, could be had for money ; and being quite weary of wandering about, we hoped to rest there a little.

Of this, however, we found no chance, for the town was full of the good Duke's soldiers ; if men may be called so, the half of whom had never been drilled, nor had fired a gun. And it was rumoured among them, that the "popish army," as they called it, was to be attacked that very night, and with God's assistance beaten. However, by this time I had been taught to pay little attention to rumours ; and having sought vainly for Tom Faggus,

among these poor rustic warriors, I took to my hostel, and went to bed, being as weary as weary can be.

Falling asleep immediately, I took heed of nothing ; although the town was all alive, and lights had come glancing, as I lay down, and shouts making echo all round my room. But all I did was to hug my pillow ; not an inch would I budge, unless the house, and even my bed, were on fire. And so for several hours I lay, in the depth of the deepest slumber, without even a dream on its surface ; until I was roused and awakened at last, by a pushing, and pulling, and pinching, and a plucking of hair out by the roots. And at length, being able to open mine eyes, I saw the old landlady, with a candle, heavily wondering at me.

“ Can’t you let me alone ? ” I grumbled : “ I have paid for my bed, mistress ; and I won’t get up, for any one.”

“ Would to God, young man,” she answered, shaking me as hard as ever, “ that the popish soldiers may sleep this night, only half as strong as thou dost ! Fie on thee, fie on thee ! Get up, and go fight ; we can hear the battle already ; and a man of thy size mought stop a cannon.”

“ I would rather stop a-bed,” said I ; “ what have I to do with fighting ? I am for King James, if any.”

“ Then thou mayest even stop a-bed,” the old woman muttered sulkily. “ A’ would never have laboured half an hour to awake a Papisher.”

I was by this time wide awake, though much aggrieved at feeling so, and through the open window heard the distant roll of musketry, and the beating of drums, with a quick rub-a-dub, and the “ come round the corner,” or trumpet-call. And perhaps Tom Faggus might be there, and shot at any moment, and my dear Annie left a poor widow, and my godson Jack an orphan, without a tooth to help him.

Therefore I reviled myself for all my heavy laziness ; and partly through good honest will, and partly through the stings of pride, and yet a little perhaps by virtue of a young man's love of riot, up I arose, and dressed myself, and woke Kickums (who was snoring), and set out to see the worst of it. The sleepy hostler scratched his poll, and could not tell me which way to take ; what odds to him who was King, or Pope, so long as he paid his way ; and got a bit of bacon on Sunday ?

Therefore I was guided mainly by the sound of guns and trumpets, in riding out of the narrow ways, and into the open marshes. And thus I might have found my road, in spite of all the spread of water, and the glaze of moonshine ; but that, as I followed sound (far from hedge or causeway), fog (like a chestnut tree in blossom, touched with moonlight) met me.

And here we had broad-water patches, in and out, inlaid on land, like mother-of-pearl in brown Shittim wood. To a wild duck, born and bred there, it would almost be a puzzle to find her own nest amongst them ; what chance then had I and Kickums, both unused to marsh and mere ? Each time when we thought that we must be right, now at last, by track or passage, and approaching the conflict, with the sounds of it waxing nearer, suddenly a break of water would be laid before us, with the moon looking mildly over it, and the northern lights behind us, dancing down the lines of fog.

It was an awful thing, I say (and to this day I remember it), to hear the sounds of raging fight, and the yells of raving slayers, and the howls of poor men stricken hard, and shattered from wrath to wailing ; then suddenly the dead low hush, as of a soul departing, and spirits kneeling over it. Through the vapour of the earth, and white breath of the water, and beneath the pale round moon (bowing as the drift went by), all this rush and pause of fear passed, or lingered, on my path.

At last, when I almost despaired of escaping from this tangle of spongy banks, and of hazy creeks, and reed-fringe, my horse heard the neigh of a fellow-horse, and was only too glad to answer it ; upon which the other, having lost his rider, came up, and pricked his ears at us, and gazed through the fog very steadfastly. Therefore I encouraged him with a soft and genial whistle, and Kickums did his best to tempt him with a snort of enquiry. However, nothing would suit that nag, except to enjoy his new freedom ; and he capered away with his tail set on high, and the stirrup-irons clashing under him. Therefore, as he might know the way, and appeared to have been in the battle, we followed him very carefully ; and he led us to a little hamlet, called (as I found afterwards) West Zuyland, or Zealand, so named perhaps from its situation amid this inland sea.

Here the King's troops had been quite lately, and their fires were still burning ; but the men themselves had been summoned away by the night attack of the rebels. Hence I procured for my guide a young man who knew the district thoroughly, and who led me by many intricate ways to the rear of the rebel army. We came upon a broad open moor, striped with sullen water-courses, shagged with sedge, and yellow iris, and in the drier part with bilberries. For by this time it was four o'clock, and the summer sun, arising wanly, showed us all the ghastly scene.

Would that I had never been there ! Often in the lonely hours, even now it haunts me : would, far more, that the piteous thing had never been done in England ! Flying men, flung back from dreams of victory and honour, only glad to have the luck of life and limbs to fly with, mud-bedraggled, foul with slime, reeking both with sweat and blood, which they could not stop to wipe, cursing, with their pumped-out lungs, every stick that hindered them, or gory puddle that slipped the step,

scarcely able to leap over the corses that had dragged to die. And to see how the corses lay ; some, as fair as death in sleep ; with the smile of placid valour, and of noble manhood, hovering yet on the silent lips. These had bloodless hands put upwards, white as wax, and firm as death, clasped (as on a monument) in prayer for dear ones left behind, or in high thanksgiving. And of these men there was nothing in their broad blue eyes to fear. But others were of different sort ; simple fellows unused to pain, accustomed to the bill-hook, perhaps, or rasp of the knuckles in a quick-set hedge, or making some to-do, at breakfast, over a thumb cut in sharpening a scythe, and expecting their wives to make more to-do. Yet here lay these poor chaps, dead ; dead, after a deal of pain, with little mind to bear it, and a soul they had never thought of ; gone, their God alone knows whither ; but to mercy we may trust. Upon these things I cannot dwell ; and none, I trow, would ask me ; only if a plain man saw what I saw that morning, he (if God had blessed him with the heart that is in most of us) must have sickened of all desire to be great among mankind.

Seeing me riding to the front (where the work of death went on, among the men of true English pluck ; which, when moved, no further moves), the fugitives called out to me, in half a dozen dialects, to make no utter fool of myself ; for the great guns were come, and the fight was over ; all the rest was slaughter.

“Arl oop wi Moonmo’,” shouted one big fellow, a miner of the Mendip hills, whose weapon was a pick-axe : “na oose to vaight na moor. Wend thee hame, young mon, agin.”

Upon this I stopped my horse, desiring not to be shot for nothing ; and eager to aid some poor sick people, who tried to lift their arms to me. And this I did to the best of my power, though void of skill in the business ; and more inclined to weep with them than to check their

weeping. While I was giving a drop of cordial from my flask to one poor fellow, who sat up, while his life was ebbing, and with slow insistence urged me when his broken voice would come, to tell his wife (whose name I knew not) something about an apple-tree, and a golden guinea stored in it, to divide among six children—in the midst of this, I felt warm lips laid against my cheek quite softly, and then a little push ; and behold it was a horse leaning over me ! I arose in haste, and there stood Winnie, looking at me with beseeching eyes, enough to melt a heart of stone. Then seeing my attention fixed, she turned her head, and glanced back sadly towards the place of battle, and gave a little wistful neigh ; and then looked me full in the face again, as much as to say, “ Do you understand ? ” while she scraped with one hoof impatiently. If ever a horse tried hard to speak, it was Winnie at that moment. I went to her side and patted her ; but that was not what she wanted. Then I offered to leap into the empty saddle ; but neither did that seem good to her ; for she ran away toward the part of the field at which she had been glancing back, and then turned round, and shook her mane, entreating me to follow her.

Upon this I learned from the dying man where to find his apple-tree, and promised to add another guinea to the one in store for his children ; and so, commending him to God, I mounted my own horse again, and to Winnie’s great delight, professed myself at her service. With her ringing silvery neigh, such as no other horse of all I ever knew could equal, she at once proclaimed her triumph, and told her master (or meant to tell, if death should not have closed his ears), that she was coming to his aid, and bringing one who might be trusted, of the higher race that kill.

A cannon-bullet fired low, and ploughing the marsh slowly, met poor Winnie front to front ; and she, being as quick as thought, lowered her nose to sniff at it. It

might be a message from her master ; for it made a mournful noise. But luckily for Winnie's life, a rise of wet ground took the ball, even under her very nose ; and there it cut a splashy groove, missing her off hind-foot by an inch, and scattering black mud over her. It frightened me much more than Winnie ; of that I am quite certain ; because, though I am firm enough, when it comes to a real tussle, and the heart of a fellow warms up, and tells him that he must go through with it ; yet I never did approve of making a cold pie of death.

Therefore, with those reckless cannons, brazen-mouthed and bellowing, two furlongs off, or it might be more (and the more the merrier), I would have given that year's hay-crop, for a bit of a hill, or a thicket of oaks, or almost even a badger's earth. People will call me a coward for this (especially when I had made up my mind that life was not worth having without any sign of Lorna) ; nevertheless, I cannot help it : those were my feelings ; and I set them down, because they made a mark on me. At Glen Doone I had fought, even against cannon, with some spirit and fury ; but now I saw nothing to fight about ; but rather in every poor doubled corpse, a good reason for not fighting. So, in cold blood riding on, and yet ashamed that a man should shrink where a horse went bravely, I cast a bitter blame upon the reckless ways of Winnie.

Nearly all were scattered now. Of the noble countrymen (armed with scythe, or pickaxe, blacksmith's hammer, or fold-pitcher), who had stood their ground for hours against blazing musketry, from men whom they could not get at, by reason of the water-dyke, and then against the deadly cannon, dragged by the Bishop's horses to slaughter his own sheep ; of these sturdy Englishmen, noble in their want of sense, scarce one out of four remained for the cowards to shoot down. " Cross the rhaine," they shouted out, " cross the rhaine, and coom within rache " : but the other mongrel Britons, with a

mongrel at their head, found it pleasanter to shoot men, who could not shoot in answer, than to meet the chance of mischief, from strong arms and stronger hearts.

The last scene of this piteous play was acting, just as I rode up. Broad daylight, and upstanding sun, winnowing fog from the eastern hills, and spreading the moors with freshness ; all along the dykes they shone, glistened on the willow-trunks, and touched the banks with a hoary grey. But alas ! those banks were touched more deeply with a gory red, and strewn with fallen trunks, more woeful than the wreck of trees ; while howling, cursing, yelling, and the loathsome reek of carnage, drowned the scent of new-mown hay, and the carol of the lark.

Then the cavalry of the King, with their horses at full speed, dashed from either side upon the helpless mob of countrymen. A few pikes feebly levelled met them ; but they shot the pikemen, drew swords, and helter-skelter leaped into the shattered and scattering mass. Right and left, they hacked and hewed ; I could hear the snapping of scythes beneath them, and see the flash of their sweeping swords. How it must end was plain enough, even to one like myself, who had never beheld such a battle before. But Winnie led me away to the left ; and as I could not help the people, neither stop the slaughter, but found the cannon-bullets coming very rudely nigh me, I was only too glad to follow her.

That faithful creature, whom I began to admire as if she were my own (which is no little thing for a man to say of another man's horse), stopped in front of a low black shed, such as we call a 'linhay.' And here she uttered a little greeting, in a subdued and softened voice, hoping to obtain an answer, such as her master was wont to give in a cheery manner. Receiving no reply, she entered ; and I (who could scarce keep up with her, poor Kickums being weary) leaped from his back, and followed. There I

found her sniffing gently, but with great emotion, at the body of Tom Faggus. A corpse poor Tom appeared to be, if ever there was one in this world ; and I turned away, and felt unable to keep altogether from weeping. But the mare either could not understand, or else would not believe it. She reached her long neck forth, and felt him with her under lip, passing it over his skin as softly as a mother would do to an infant ; and then she looked up at me again ; as much as to say, " He is all right."

Upon this I took courage, and handled poor Tom, which being young I had feared at first to do. He groaned very feebly, as I raised him up ; and there was the wound, a great savage one (whether from pike-thrust or musket-ball) gaping and welling in his right side, from which a piece seemed to be torn away. I bound it up with some of my linen, so far as I knew how ; just to stanch the flow of blood, until we could get a doctor. Then I gave him a little weak brandy and water, which he drank with the greatest eagerness, and made sign to me for more of it. But not knowing how far it was right to give cordial under the circumstances, I handed him unmixed water that time ; thinking that he was too far gone to perceive the difference. But herein I wronged Tom Faggus ; for he shook his head, and frowned at me. Even at the door of death, he would not drink what Adam drank, by whom came death into the world. So I gave him a little more *eau-de-vie*, and he took it most submissively.

After that he seemed better, and a little colour came into his cheeks ; and he looked at Winnie and knew her ; and would have her nose in his clammy hand, though I thought it not good for either of them. With the stay of my arm he sat upright, and faintly looked about him ; as if at the end of a violent dream, too much for his power of mind. Then he managed to whisper, " Is Winnie hurt ? "

" As sound as a roach," I answered. " Then so am I," said he : " put me upon her back, John ; she and I die together."

Surprised as I was at this fatalism (for so it appeared to me), of which he had often shown symptoms before (but I took them for mere levity), now I knew not what to do ; for it seemed to me a murderous thing to set such a man on horseback ; where he must surely bleed to death, even if he could keep the saddle. But he told me, with many breaks and pauses, that unless I obeyed his orders, he would tear off all my bandages, and accept no further aid from me.

While I was yet hesitating, a storm of horse at full gallop went by, tearing, swearing, bearing away all the country before them. Only a little pollard hedge kept us from their blood-shot eyes. " Now is the time," said my cousin Tom, so far as I could make out his words ; " on their heels, I am safe, John, if I only have Winnie under me. Winnie and I die together."

Seeing this strong bent of his mind, stronger than any pains of death, I even did what his feeble eyes sometimes implored, and sometimes commanded. With a strong sash, from his own hot neck, bound and twisted, tight as wax, around his damaged waist, I set him upon Winnie's back, and placed his trembling feet in stirrups, with a band from one to other, under the good mare's body ; so that no swerve could throw him out : and then I said, " Lean forward, Tom ; it will stop your hurt from bleeding." He leaned almost on the neck of the mare, which, as I knew, must close the wound ; and the light of his eyes was quite different, and the pain of his forehead unstrung itself, as he felt the undulous readiness of her volatile paces under him.

" God bless you, John ; I am safe," he whispered, fearing to open his lungs much ; " who can come near my Winnie mare ? A mile of her gallop is ten years of life. Look out for yourself, John Ridd." He sucked his lips, and the mare went off, as easy and swift as a swallow.

From " Lorna Doone "

A PLOT THAT FAILED

W. M. THACKERAY

JAMES was not so clever as his brother, and in three years his attempts to restore the Roman Catholic religion and to override the laws of the land angered both parties, so that he was forced to flee the country, and the throne was given to his daughter Mary and her husband, William of Orange. But James still had adherents in the kingdom, and our story tells of a plot to give him back his crown. The rest of *Esmond* carries you on through the reign of Queen Anne, and you may read how James's son, afterward known as the Old Pretender, threw away a chance to succeed the queen.

THE family were away (from Castlewood) more than six months, and when they returned they were in the deepest state of dejection, for King James had been banished, the Prince of Orange was on the throne, and the direst persecutions of those of the Catholic faith were apprehended by my lady, who said she did not believe that there was a word of truth in the promises of toleration that the Dutch monster made, or in a single word the perjured wretch said. My lord and lady were in a manner prisoners in their own house ; so her ladyship gave the little page to know, who was by this time growing of an age to understand what was passing about him, and something of the characters of the people he lived with.

Father Holt came to the Hall constantly, but officiated

no longer openly as chaplain ; he was always fetching and carrying ; strangers, military and ecclesiastic, were continually arriving and departing. My lord made long absences and sudden reappearances, using sometimes the means of exit which Father Holt had employed, though how often the little window in the chaplain's room let in or let out my lord and his friends, Harry could not tell. He stoutly kept his promise to the father of not prying, and if at midnight from his little room he heard noises of persons stirring in the next chamber, he turned round to the wall and hid his curiosity under his pillow until it fell asleep. Of course he could not help remarking that the priest's journeys were constant, and understanding by a hundred signs that some active though secret business employed him : what this was may pretty well be guessed by what soon happened to my lord.

No garrison or watch was put into Castlewood when my lord came back, but a guard was in the village ; and one or other of them was always on the Green keeping a look-out on our great gate, and those who went out and in. Lockwood (the porter) said that at night especially every person who came in or went out was watched by the outlying sentries. 'Twas lucky that we had a gate which their worships knew nothing about. My lord and Father Holt must have made constant journeys at night : once or twice little Harry acted as their messenger and discreet little aide-de-camp. He remembers he was bidden to go into the village with his fishing-rod, enter certain houses, ask for a drink of water, and tell the good man : " There would be a horse-market at Newbury next Thursday," and so carry the same message on to the next house on his list.

He did not know what the message meant at the time, nor what was happening : which may as well, however, for clearness' sake, be explained here. The Prince of Orange being gone to Ireland, where the King was ready

to meet him with a great army, it was determined that a great rising of his Majesty's party should take place in this country : and my lord was to head the force in our county. Of late he had taken a greater lead in affairs than before, having the indefatigable Mr Holt at his elbow, and my lady viscountess strongly urging him on ; and my Lord Sark being in the Tower a prisoner, and Sir Wilmot Crawley, of Queen's Crawley, having gone over to the Prince of Orange's side—my lord became the most considerable person in our part of the county for the affairs of the King.

It was arranged that the regiment of Scots Greys and Dragoons, then quartered at Newbury, should declare for the King on a certain day, when likewise the gentry affected to his Majesty's cause were to come in with their tenants and adherents to Newbury, march upon the Dutch troops at Reading under Ginckel, and, these overthrown, and their indomitable little master away in Ireland, 'twas thought that our side might move on London itself, and a confident victory was predicted for the King.

As these great matters were in agitation, my lord lost his listless manner and seemed to gain health ; my lady did not scold him, Mr Holt came to and fro, busy always ; and little Harry longed to have been a few inches taller, that he might draw a sword in this good cause.

One day, it must have been about the month of July 1690, my lord, in a great horseman's coat, under which Harry could see the shining of a steel breastplate he had on, called little Harry to him, put the hair off the child's forehead, and kissed him, and bade God bless him in such an affectionate way as he had never used before. Father Holt blessed him too, and then they took leave of my lady viscountess, who came from her apartment with a pocket-handkerchief to her eyes, and her gentlewoman and Mrs Tusher supporting her.

"You are going to—to ride," says she. "Oh, that I might come too!"

"We kiss my lady marchioness's hand," says Mr Holt.

"My lord, God speed you!" she said, stepping up and embracing my lord in a grand manner. "Mr Holt, I ask your blessing"; and she knelt down for that, whilst Mrs Tusher tossed her head up.

Mr Holt gave the same benediction to the little page, who went down and held my lord's stirrups for him to mount; there were two servants waiting there too—and they rode out of Castlewood gate.

As they crossed the bridge Harry could see an officer in scarlet ride up, touching his hat, and address my lord.

The party stopped, and came to some parley or discussion, which presently ended, my lord putting his horse into a canter after taking off his hat and making a bow to the officer who rode alongside him step for step: the trooper accompanying him falling back and riding with my lord's two men. They cantered over the Green, and behind the elms (my lord waving his hand, Harry thought), and so they disappeared.

That evening we had a great panic, the cow-boy coming at milking-time riding one of our horses which he had found grazing at the outer park wall.

All night my lady viscountess was in a very quiet and subdued mood. She scarce found fault with anybody; she played at cards for six hours; little page Esmond went to sleep. He prayed for my lord and the good cause before closing his eyes.

It was quite in the grey of the morning when the porter's bell rang, and old Lockwood, waking up, let in one of my lord's servants, who had gone with him in the morning, and who returned with a melancholy story.

The officer who rode up to my lord had, it appeared, said to him that it was his duty to inform his lordship

that he was not under arrest, but under surveillance, and to request him not to ride abroad that day.

My lord replied that riding was good for his health, that if the captain chose to accompany him he was welcome, and it was then that he made a bow, and they cantered away together.

When he came on to Wansey Down, my lord all of a sudden pulled up, and the party came to a halt at the cross-way.

"Sir," says he to the officer, "we are four to two; will you be so kind as to take that road, and leave me to go mine?"

"Your road is mine, my lord," says the officer.

"Then," says my lord, but he had no time to say more, for the officer, drawing a pistol, snapped it at his lordship; as at the same moment Father Holt, drawing a pistol, shot the officer through the head.

It was done, and the man dead in an instant of time. The orderly, gazing at the officer, looked scared for a moment, and galloped away for his life.

"Fire! fire!" cries out Father Holt, sending another shot after the trooper, but the two servants were too much surprised to use their pieces, and my lord calling to them to hold their hands, the fellow got away.

"Mr Holt," says Blaise, "gets off his horse, examines the pockets of the dead officer for papers, gives his money to us two, and says, 'The wine is drawn, monsieur le marquis,'—why did he say marquis to monsieur le vicomte?—'we must drink it.'"

"The poor gentleman's horse was a better one than that I rode," Blaise continues. "Mr Holt bids me get on him, and so I gave a cut to Whitefoot, and she trotted home. We rode on towards Newbury; we heard firing towards midday; at two o'clock a horseman comes up to us as we were giving our cattle water at an inn—and says, 'All is done. The Ecossois declared an hour too soon

—General Ginckel was down upon them. The whole thing was at an end.'

" 'And we've shot an officer on duty, and let his orderly escape,' says my lord.

" 'Blaise,' says Mr Holt, writing two lines on his table-book, one for my lady and one for you, Master Harry; 'you must go back to Castlewood and deliver these,' and behold me."

And he gave Harry the two papers. He read that to himself, which only said, "Burn the papers in the cupboard, burn this. You know nothing about anything." Harry read this, ran upstairs to his mistress's apartment, where her gentlewoman slept near the door, made her bring a light and wake my lady, into whose hands he gave the paper.

As soon as she had the paper in her hand, Harry stepped back to the chaplain's room, opened the secret cupboard over the fireplace, burned all the papers in it, and, as he had seen the priest do before, took down one of his reverence's manuscript sermons, and half burnt that in the brazier. By the time the papers were quite destroyed it was daylight. Harry ran back to his mistress again. Her gentlewoman ushered him again into her ladyship's chamber; she told him to bid the coach be got ready, and that she would ride away anon.

But the mysteries of her ladyship's toilet were as awfully long on this day as on any other, and long after the coach was ready my lady was still attiring herself. And just as the viscountess stepped forth from her room, ready for departure, young Job Lockwood comes running up from the village with news that a lawyer, three officers, and twenty or four-and-twenty soldiers, were marching thence upon the house. Job had but two minutes the start of them, and, ere he had well told his story, the troop rode into our courtyard.

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At first my lady was for dying, like Mary, Queen of Scots (to whom she fancied she bore a resemblance in beauty), and, stroking her scraggy neck, said, "They will find Isabel of Castlewood is equal to her fate." Her gentlewoman, Victoire, persuaded her that her prudent course was, as she could not fly, to receive the troops as though she suspected nothing, and that her chamber was the best place wherein to await them. So her black japan casket which Harry was to carry to the coach was taken back to her ladyship's chamber, whither the maid and mistress retired. Victoire came out presently, bidding the page to say her ladyship was ill, confined to her bed with the rheumatism.

By this time the soldiers had reached Castlewood. Harry Esmond saw them from the window of the tapestry parlour; a couple of sentinels were posted at the gate—a half-dozen more walked towards the stable; and some others, preceded by their commander, and a man in black, a lawyer probably, were conducted by one of the servants to the stair leading up to the part of the house which my lord and lady inhabited.

So the captain, a handsome kind man, and the lawyer, came through the ante-room to the tapestry parlour, and where now was nobody but young Harry Esmond, the page.

"Tell your mistress, little man," says the captain kindly, "that we must speak to her."

"My mistress is ill abed," said the page.

"What complaint has she?" asked the captain.

The boy said, "The rheumatism!"

"Rheumatism! that's a sad complaint," continues the good-natured captain; "and the coach is in the yard to fetch the doctor, I suppose?"

"I don't know," says the boy.

"And how long has her ladyship been ill?"

"I don't know," says the boy.

"When did my lord go away?"

"Yesterday night."

"With Father Holt?"

"With Mr Holt."

"And which way did they travel?" asks the lawyer.

"They travelled without me," says the page.

"We must see Lady Castlewood."

"I have orders that nobody goes in to her ladyship—she is sick," says the page; but at this moment Victoire came out. "Hush!" says she; and, as if not knowing that any one was near, "What's this noise?" says she. "Is this gentleman the doctor?"

"Stuff! we must see Lady Castlewood," says the lawyer, pushing by.

The curtains of her ladyship's room were down, and the chamber dark, and she was in bed with a nightcap on her head, and propped up by her pillows, looking none the less ghastly because of the red which was still on her cheeks, and which she could not afford to forgo.

"Is that the doctor?" she said.

"There is no use with this deception, madam," Captain Westbury said (for so he was named). "My duty is to arrest the person of Thomas, Viscount Castlewood, a non-juring peer—of Thomas Tusher, Vicar of Castlewood—and Henry Holt, known under various other names and designations, a Jesuit priest, who officiated as chaplain here in the late King's time, and is now at the head of the conspiracy which was about to break out in this country against the authority of their Majesties King William and Queen Mary—and my orders are to search the house for such papers or traces of the conspiracy as may be found here. Your ladyship will please to give me your keys, and it will be as well for yourself that you should help us, in every way, in our search."

"You see, sir, that I have the rheumatism, and cannot move," said the lady, looking uncommonly ghastly as

she sat up in her bed, where however she had had her cheeks painted, and a new cap put on, so that she might at least look her best when the officers came.

"I shall take leave to place a sentinel in the chamber, so that your ladyship, in case you should wish to rise, may have an arm to lean on," Captain Westbury said. "Your woman will show me where I am to look"; and Madame Victoire, chattering in her half-French and half-English jargon, opened while the captain examined one drawer after another; but, as Harry Esmond thought, rather carelessly, with a smile on his face, as if he were only conducting the examination for form's sake.

Before one of the cupboards Victoire flung herself down, stretching out her arms, and, with a piercing shriek, cried, "*Non, jamais, monsieur l'officier ! Jamais !* I will rather die than let you see this wardrobe."

But Captain Westbury would open it, still with a smile on his face, which, when the box was opened, turned into a fair burst of laughter. It contained, not papers regarding the conspiracy, but my lady's wigs, washes, and rouge-pots, and Victoire said men were monsters, as the captain went on with his perquisition. He tapped the back to see whether or no it was hollow, and as he thrust his hands into the cupboard, my lady from her bed called out with a voice that did not sound like that of a very sick woman, "Is it your commission to insult ladies as well as to arrest gentlemen?"

"These articles are only dangerous when worn by your ladyship," the captain said with a low bow, and a mock grin of politeness. "I have found nothing that concerns the Government as yet—only the weapons with which beauty is authorized to kill," says he, pointing to a wig with his sword-tip. "We must now proceed to search the rest of the house."

"You are not going to leave that wretch in the room with me," cried my lady, pointing to the soldier.

"What can I do, madam? Somebody you must have to smooth your pillow and bring your medicine—permit me——"

"Sir!" screamed out my lady.

"Madam, if you are too ill to leave the bed," the captain then said, rather sternly, "I must have in four of my men to lift you off the sheet; I must examine this bed, in a word; papers may be hidden in a bed as elsewhere; we know that very well, and——"

Here it was her ladyship's turn to shriek, for the captain, with his fist shaking the pillows and bolsters, at last came to "burn," as they say in the play of forfeits, and wrenching away one of the pillows, said, "Look, did I not tell you so? Here is a pillow stuffed with paper."

"Some villain has betrayed us," cried out my lady, sitting up in the bed, showing herself full dressed under her night-rail.

"And now your ladyship can move, I am sure; permit me to give you my hand to rise. You will have to travel for some distance, as far as Hexton Castle to-night. Will you have your coach? Your woman shall attend you if you like—and the japan-box?"

"Sir! you don't strike a *man* when he is down," said my lady, with some dignity: "can you not spare a woman?"

"Your ladyship must please to rise and let me search the bed," said the captain; "there is no more time to lose in bandying talk."

And, without more ado, the gaunt old woman got up. Harry Esmond recollected to the end of his life that figure, with the brocade dress and the white night-rail, and the gold-clocked red stockings, and white red-heeled shoes sitting up in the bed, and stepping down from it. The trunks were ready packed for departure in her ante-room, and the horses ready harnessed in the stable: about all which the captain seemed to know, by information got from some quarter or other; and whence, Esmond could

make a pretty shrewd guess in after-times, when Dr Tusher complained that King William's Government had basely treated him for services done in that cause.

And here he may relate, though he was then too young to know all that was happening, what the papers contained of which Captain Westbury had made a seizure, and which papers had been transferred from the japan-box to the bed when the officers arrived.

There was a list of gentlemen of the county in Father Holt's handwriting—Mr Freeman's (King James's) friends—a similar paper being found among those of Sir John Fenwick and Mr Coplestone, who suffered death for the conspiracy.

There was a patent conferring the title of Marquis of Esmond on my Lord Castlewood, and the heirs male of his body ; his appointment as lord-lieutenant of the county and major-general.

The rest were various letters from the nobility and gentry, some ardent and some doubtful, in the King's service.

The seizure of the papers effected, the gentlemen did not pursue their further search through Castlewood house very rigorously. They examined Mr Holt's room, being led thither by his pupil, who showed, as the father had bidden him, the place where the key of his chamber lay, opened the door for the gentlemen, and conducted them into the room.

When the gentlemen came to the half-burned papers in the brazier, they examined them eagerly enough, and their young guide was a little amused at their perplexity.

"What are these ?" says one.

"They're written in a foreign language," says the lawyer. "What are you laughing at, little whelp ?" adds he, turning round as he saw the boy smile.

"Mr Holt said they were sermons," Harry said, "and told me to burn them" ; which indeed was true of those papers.

"Sermons indeed—it's treason, I would lay a wager," cries the lawyer.

"Egad! it's Greek to me," says Captain Westbury. "Can you read it, little boy?"

"Yes, sir, a little," Harry said.

"Then read, and read in English, sir, on your peril," said the lawyer. And Harry began to translate:—

"Hath not one of your own writers said, 'The children of Adam are now labouring as much as he himself ever did, about the tree of knowledge of good and evil, shaking the boughs thereof, and seeking the fruit, being for the most part unmindful of the tree of life. O blind generation! 'tis this tree of knowledge to which the serpent has led you'"—and here the boy was obliged to stop, the rest of the page being charred by the fire: and asked of the lawyer—"Shall I go on, sir?"

The lawyer said—"This boy is deeper than he seems: who knows that he is not laughing at us?"

"Let's have in Dick the Scholar," cried Captain Westbury, laughing; and he called to a trooper out of the window—"Ho, Dick, come in here and construe."

A thick-set soldier, with a square good-humoured face, came in at the summons, saluting the officer.

"Tell us what is this, Dick," says the lawyer.

"My name is Steele, sir," says the soldier. "I may be Dick for my friends, but I don't name gentlemen of your cloth amongst them."

"Well then, Steele."

"Mr Steele, sir, if you please. When you address a gentleman of his Majesty's Horse Guards, be pleased not to be so familiar."

"I didn't know, sir," said the lawyer.

"How should you? I take it you are not accustomed to meet with gentlemen," says the trooper.

"Hold thy prate, and read that bit of paper," says Westbury.

"'Tis Latin," says Dick, glancing at it, and again saluting his officer, "and from a sermon of Mr Cudworth's," and he translated the words pretty much as Henry Esmond had rendered them.

"What a young scholar you are," says the captain to the boy.

"Depend on't, he knows more than he tells," says the lawyer. "I think we will pack him off in the coach with old Jezebel."

"For construing a bit of Latin?" said the captain very good-naturedly.

"I would as lief go there as anywhere," Harry Esmond said, simply, "for there is nobody here to care for me."

The horses were by this time harnessed to the coach; and the countess and Victoire came down and were put into the vehicle. The viscountess, giving him her lean hand to kiss, bade him always to be faithful to the house of Esmond.

Harry Esmond was too young to have been introduced into the secrets of politics in which his patrons were implicated; for they put but few questions to the boy (who was little of stature, and looked much younger than his age), and such questions as they put he answered cautiously enough, and professing even more ignorance than he had, for which his examiners willingly enough gave him credit. He did not say a word about the window or the cupboard over the fireplace; and these secrets quite escaped the eyes of the searchers.

So then my lady was consigned to her coach, and sent off to Hexton, with her woman and the man of law to bear her company, a couple of troopers riding on either side of the coach. And Harry was left behind at the Hall, belonging as it were to nobody, and quite alone in the world.

From "Henry Esmond"

A SKIRMISH IN THE '45

SIR WALTER SCOTT

FORTY-SEVEN years more have passed, and, skipping the Old Pretender's attempt to regain the throne in 1715, we reach 1745, in which year his son Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, landed in Scotland, gathered the Highlanders to his standard, seized Edinburgh, and penetrated England as far as Derby. But his troops began to leave him, and he decided to retreat. Here is a picture of a skirmish during that withdrawal.

THE reader need hardly be reminded that, after a council of war was held at Derby on the 5th of December, the Highlanders relinquished their desperate attempt to penetrate farther into England, and, greatly to the dissatisfaction of their young and daring leader, positively determined to return northward. They commenced their retreat accordingly, and, by the extreme celerity of their movements, outstripped the motions of the Duke of Cumberland, who now pursued them with a very large body of cavalry.

This retreat was a virtual resignation of their towering hopes. None had been so sanguine as Fergus Mac-Ivor ; none, consequently, was so cruelly mortified at the change of measures. He argued, or rather remonstrated, with the utmost vehemence at the council of war ; and, when his opinion was rejected, shed tears of grief and indignation. From that moment his whole manner was so much

altered, that he could scarcely have been recognised for the same soaring and ardent spirit, for whom the whole earth seemed too narrow but a week before. The retreat had continued for several days, when Edward, to his surprise, early on the 12th of December, received a visit from the Chieftain in his quarters, in a hamlet about half way between Shap and Penrith.

Having had no intercourse with the Chieftain since their rupture, Edward waited with some anxiety an explanation of this unexpected visit: nor could he help being surprised, and somewhat shocked, with the change in his appearance. His eye had lost much of its fire; his cheek was hollow, his voice was languid, even his gait seemed less firm and elastic than it was wont; and his dress, to which he used to be particularly attentive, was now carelessly flung about him. He invited Edward to walk out with him by the little river in the vicinity, and smiled in a melancholy manner when he observed him take down and buckle on his sword.

As soon as they were in a wild sequestered path by the side of the stream, the Chief broke out,—“Our fine adventure is now totally ruined, Waverley, and I wish to know what you intend to do—nay, never stare at me, man. I tell you I received a packet from my sister yesterday, and, had I got the information it contains sooner, it would have prevented a quarrel, which I am always vexed when I think of. In a letter written after our dispute, I acquainted her with the cause of it; and she now replies to me, that she never had, nor could have, any purpose of giving you encouragement; so that it seems I have acted like a madman.—Poor Flora! she writes in high spirits; what a change will the news of this unhappy retreat make in her state of mind!”

Waverley, who was really much affected by the deep tone of melancholy with which Fergus spoke, affectionately entreated him to banish from his remembrance any

unkindness which had arisen between them, and they once more shook hands, but now with sincere cordiality. Fergus again inquired of Waverley what he intended to do. "Had you not better leave this luckless army, and get down before us into Scotland, and embark for the Continent, from some of the eastern ports that are still in our possession? When you are out of the kingdom, your friends will easily negotiate your pardon." . . .

"How," answered Edward, "can you advise me to desert the expedition in which we are all embarked?"

"Embarked?" said Fergus; "the vessel is going to pieces, and it is full time for all who can to get into the long-boat and leave her."

"Why, what will other gentlemen do?" answered Waverley, "and why did the Highland Chiefs consent to this retreat, if it is so ruinous?"

"Oh," replied Mac-Ivor, "they think that, as on former occasions, the heading, hanging, and forfeiting, will chiefly fall to the lot of the Lowland gentry; that they will be left secure in their poverty and their fastnesses, there, according to their proverb, 'to listen to the wind upon the hill till the waters abate.' But they will be disappointed; they have been too often troublesome to be so repeatedly passed over, and this time John Bull has been too heartily frightened to recover his humour for some time. The Hanoverian ministers always deserved to be hanged for rascals; but now, if they get the power into their hands,—as, sooner or later, they must, since there is neither rising in England nor assistance from France,—they will deserve the gallows as fools, if they leave a single clan in the Highlands in a situation to be again troublesome to government. Ay, they will make root-and-branch work, I warrant them."

"And while you recommend flight to me," said Edward,—"a counsel which I would rather die than embrace,—what are your own views?"

"Oh," answered Fergus, with a melancholy air, "my fate is settled. Dead or captive I must be before to-morrow."

"What do you mean by that, my friend?" said Edward. "The enemy is still a day's march in our rear, and if he comes up, we are still strong enough to keep him in check. Remember Gladsmuir."

"What I tell you is true notwithstanding, so far as I am individually concerned."

"Upon what authority can you found so melancholy a prediction?" asked Waverley.

"Upon one which never failed a person of my house. I have seen," he said, lowering his voice, "I have seen the Bodach Glas."

"Bodach Glas?"

"Yes: have you been so long at Glennaquoich, and never heard of the Grey Spectre? though there is a certain reluctance among us to mention him."

"No, never."

"Ah! it would have been a tale for poor Flora to have told you. Or, if that hill were Benmore, and that long blue lake, which you see just winding towards yon mountainous country, were Loch Tay, or my own Loch an Ri, the tale would be better suited with scenery. However, let us sit down on this knoll; even Saddleback and Ulswater will suit what I have to say better than the English hedgerows, enclosures, and farm-houses. You must know, then, that when my ancestor, Ian nan Chaistel, wasted Northumberland, there was associated with him in the expedition a sort of Southland Chief, or captain of a band of Lowlanders, called Halbert Hall. In their return through the Cheviots, they quarrelled about the division of the great booty they had acquired, and came from words to blows. The Lowlanders were cut off to a man, and their chief fell the last, covered with wounds by the sword of my ancestor. Since that time his spirit has crossed the Vich Ian Vohr on the day when any great

disaster was impending, but especially before approaching death. My father saw him twice ; once before he was made prisoner at Sheriff-Muir ; another time on the morning of the day on which he died."

"How can you, my dear Fergus, tell such nonsense with a grave face ?"

"I do not ask you to believe it ; but I tell you the truth, ascertained by three hundred years' experience at least, and last night by my own eyes."

"The particulars, for heaven's sake !" said Waverley, with eagerness.

"I will, on condition you will not attempt a jest on the subject.—Since this unhappy retreat commenced, I have scarce ever been able to sleep for thinking of my clan, and of this poor Prince, whom they are leading back like a dog on a string, whether he will or no, and of the downfall of my family. Last night I felt so feverish that I left my quarters, and walked out, in the hopes that the keen frosty air would brace my nerves—I cannot tell how much I dislike going on, for I know you will hardly believe me. However—I crossed a small footbridge, and kept walking backwards and forwards, when I observed with surprise, by the clear moonlight, a tall figure in a grey plaid, such as shepherds wear in the south of Scotland, which, move at what pace I would, kept regularly about four yards before me."

"You saw a Cumberland peasant in his ordinary dress, probably."

"No ; I thought so at first, and was astonished at the man's audacity in daring to dog me. I called to him, but received no answer. I felt an anxious throbbing at my heart, and to ascertain what I dreaded, I stood still, and turned myself on the same spot successively to the four points of the compass.—By Heaven, Edward, turn where I would, the figure was instantly before my eyes, at precisely the same distance ! I was then convinced it

was the Bodach Glas. My hair bristled, and my knees shook. I manned myself, however, and determined to return to my quarters. My ghastly visitant glided before me (for I cannot say he walked), until he reached the foot-bridge : there he stopped, and turned full round. I must either wade the river, or pass him as close as I am to you. A desperate courage, founded on the belief that my death was near, made me resolve to make my way in spite of him. I made the sign of the cross, drew my sword, and uttered, ' In the name of God, Evil Spirit, give place ! ' ' Vich Ian Vohr,' it said, in a voice that made my very blood curdle, ' beware of to-morrow ! ' It seemed at that moment not half a yard from my sword's point ; but the words were no sooner spoken than it was gone, and nothing appeared further to obstruct my passage. I got home, and threw myself on my bed, where I spent a few hours heavily enough ; and this morning, as no enemy was reported to be near us, I took my horse, and rode forward to make up matters with you. I would not willingly fall until I am in charity with a wronged friend."

Edward had little doubt that this phantom was the operation of an exhausted frame and depressed spirits, working on the belief common to all Highlanders in such superstitions. He did not the less pity Fergus, for whom, in his present distress, he felt all his former regard revive. With the view of diverting his mind from these gloomy images, he offered, with the Baron's permission, which he knew he could readily obtain, to remain in his quarters till Fergus's corps should come up, and then to march with them as usual. The Chief seemed much pleased, yet hesitated to accept the offer.

" We are, you know, in the rear—the post of danger in a retreat."

" And therefore the post of honour."

" Well," replied the Chieftain, " let Alick have your

horse in readiness, in case we should be overmatched, and I shall be delighted to have your company once more."

The rear-guard were late in making their appearance, having been delayed by various accidents, and by the badness of the roads. At length they entered the hamlet. When Waverley joined the clan Mac-Ivor, arm-in-arm with their Chieftain, all the resentment they had entertained against him seemed blown off at once. Evan Dhu received him with a grin of congratulation; and even Callum, who was running about as active as ever, pale indeed, and with a great patch on his head, appeared delighted to see him.

"That gallows-bird's skull," said Fergus, "must be harder than marble: the lock of the pistol was actually broken."

"How could you strike so young a lad so hard?" said Waverley with some interest.

"Why, if I did not strike hard sometimes, the rascals would forget themselves."

They were now in full march, every caution being taken to prevent surprise. Fergus's people, and a fine clan regiment from Badenoch, commanded by Cluny Mac-Pherson, had the rear. They had passed a large open moor, and were entering into the enclosures which surround a small village called Clifton. The winter sun had set, and Edward began to rally Fergus upon the false predictions of the Grey Spirit. "The Ides of March are not past," said Mac-Ivor, with a smile; when, suddenly casting his eyes back on the moor, a large body of cavalry was indistinctly seen to hover upon its brown and dark surface. To line the enclosures facing the open ground, and the road by which the enemy must move from it upon the village, was the work of a short time. While these manœuvres were accomplishing, night sunk down, dark and gloomy, though the moon was at full. Some-

times, however, she gleamed forth a dubious light upon the scene of action.

The Highlanders did not long remain undisturbed in the defensive position they had adopted. Favoured by night, one large body of dismounted dragoons attempted to force the enclosures, while another, equally strong, strove to penetrate by the high road. Both were received by such a heavy fire as disconcerted their ranks, and effectually checked their progress. Unsatisfied with the advantage thus gained, Fergus, to whose ardent spirit the approach of danger seemed to restore all its elasticity, drawing his sword, and calling out "Claymore!" encouraged his men, by voice and example, to break through the hedge which divided them, and rush down upon the enemy. Mingling with the dismounted dragoons, they forced them, at the sword-point, to fly to the open moor, where a considerable number were cut to pieces. But the moon, which suddenly shone out, showed to the English the small number of assailants, disordered by their own success. Two squadrons of horse moving to the support of their companions, the Highlanders endeavoured to recover the enclosures. But several of them, amongst others their brave Chieftain, were cut off and surrounded before they could effect their purpose. Waverley, looking eagerly for Fergus, from whom, as well as from the retreating body of his followers, he had been separated in the darkness and tumult, saw him, with Evan Dhu and Callum, defending themselves desperately against a dozen of horsemen, who were hewing at them with their long broadswords. The moon was again at that moment totally overclouded, and Edward in the obscurity could neither bring aid to his friends, nor discover which way lay his own road to rejoin the rear-guard. After once or twice narrowly escaping being slain or made prisoner by parties of the cavalry whom he encountered in the darkness, he at length reached an

enclosure, and, clambering over it, concluded himself in safety, and on the way to the Highland forces, whose pipes he heard at some distance. For Fergus hardly a hope remained, unless that he might be made prisoner. Revolving his fate with sorrow and anxiety, the superstition of the Bodach Glas recurred to Edward's recollection, and he said to himself, with internal surprise, "What, can the devil speak truth?"

From "Waverley"

THE NO POPERY RIOTS

CHARLES DICKENS

THIS is a picture of London near the end of the eighteenth century, when the British colonial empire that had been built up was in danger and the American colonies were practically lost. The half-crazy Lord George Gordon had formed a Protestant Association to obtain the repeal of an Act for relieving Roman Catholics, and in 1780 the events recorded in this story took place. The mob proceeded to do much damage, and in *Barnaby Rudge* you can read how Newgate Prison was burned. Several hundred persons were killed and wounded before the riots were quelled.

THE mob had been divided from its first assemblage into four divisions : the London, the Westminster, the Southwark, and the Scotch. Each of these divisions being subdivided into various bodies, and these bodies being drawn up in various forms and figures, the general arrangement was, except to the few chiefs and leaders, as unintelligible as the plan of a great battle to the meanest soldier in the field. It was not without its method, however ; for, in a very short space of time after being put in motion, the crowd had resolved itself into three great parties, and were prepared, as had been arranged, to cross the river by different bridges, and make for the House of Commons in separate detachments.

At the head of the division which had Westminster Bridge for its approach to the scene of action, Lord

George Gordon took his post ; with Gashford at his right hand, and sundry ruffians, of most unpromising appearance, forming a kind of staff about him. The conduct of a second party, whose route lay by Blackfriars, was entrusted to a committee of management, including perhaps a dozen men : while the third, which was to go by London Bridge, and through the main streets, in order that their numbers and their serious intentions might be the better known and appreciated by the citizens, were led by Simon Tappertit (assisted by a few subalterns, selected by the Brotherhood of United Bull-dogs), Dennis the hangman, Hugh, and some others.

The word of command being given, each of these great bodies took the road assigned to it, and departed on its way, in perfect order and profound silence. That which went through the City greatly exceeded the others in number, and was of such prodigious extent that when the rear began to move, the front was nearly four miles in advance, notwithstanding that the men marched three abreast and followed very close upon each other.

At the head of this party, in the place where Hugh, in the madness of his humour, had stationed him, and walking between that dangerous companion and the hangman, went Barnaby ; as many a man among the thousands who looked on that day afterwards remembered well. Forgetful of all other things in the ecstasy of the moment, his face flushed and his eyes sparkling with delight, heedless of the weight of the great banner he carried, and mindful only of its flashing in the sun and rustling in the summer breeze, on he went, proud, happy, elated past all telling—the only light-hearted, undesigning creature in the whole assembly.

“What do you think of this ?” asked Hugh, as they passed through the crowded streets, and looked up at the windows which were thronged with spectators. “They have all turned out to see our flags and streamers ? Eh, Barnaby ?

Why, Barnaby's the greatest man of all the pack ! His flag's the largest of the lot, the brightest too. There's nothing in the show like Barnaby. All eyes are turned on him. Ha, ha, ha ! ”

“ Don't make that din, brother,” growled the hangman, glancing with no very approving eyes at Barnaby as he spoke : “ I hope he don't think there's nothing to be done but carrying that there piece of blue rag, like a boy at a breaking up. You're ready for action I hope, eh ? You, I mean,” he added, nudging Barnaby roughly with his elbow. “ What are you staring at ? Why don't you speak ? ”

Barnaby had been gazing at his flag, and looked vacantly from his questioner to Hugh.

“ He don't understand your way,” said the latter. “ Here, I'll explain it to him. Barnaby, old boy, attend to me.”

“ I'll attend,” said Barnaby, looking anxiously round : “ but I wish I could see her somewhere.”

“ See who ? ” demanded Dennis in a gruff tone. “ You an't in love I hope, brother ? That an't the sort of thing for us, you know. We must have no love here.”

“ She would be proud indeed to see me now, eh, Hugh ? ” said Barnaby. “ Wouldn't it make her glad to see me at the head of this large show ? She'd cry for joy, I know she would. Where *can* she be ? She never sees me at my best, and what do I care to be gay and fine if *she's* not by ? ”

“ Why, what palaver's this ? ” asked Mr Dennis with supreme disdain. “ We an't got no sentimental members among us, I hope.”

“ Don't be uneasy, brother,” cried Hugh, “ he's only talking of his mother.”

“ Of his what ? ” said Mr Dennis with a strong oath.

“ His mother.”

“ And I have combined myself with this here section, and turned out on this here memorable day, to hear men

talk about their mothers ! ” growled Mr Dennis with extreme disgust. “ The notion of a man’s sweetheart’s bad enough, but a man’s mother ! ”—and here his disgust was so extreme that he spat upon the ground, and could say no more.

“ Barnaby’s right,” cried Hugh with a grin, “ and I say it. Lookee, bold lad. If she’s not here to see, it’s because I’ve provided for her, and sent half a dozen gentlemen, every one of ’em with a blue flag (but not half as fine as yours) to take her, in state, to a grand house all hung round with gold and silver banners, and everything else you please, where she’ll wait till you come, and want for nothing.”

“ Ay ! ” said Barnaby, his face beaming with delight ! “ have you indeed ? That’s good hearing. That’s fine ! Kind Hugh ! ”

“ But nothing to what will come, bless you,” retorted Hugh, with a wink at Dennis, who regarded his new companion-in-arms with great astonishment.

“ No, indeed ? ” cried Barnaby.

“ Nothing at all,” said Hugh. “ Money, cocked hats and feathers, red coats and gold lace ; all the fine things there are, ever were, or will be ; will belong to us if we are true to that noble gentleman—the best man in the world—carry our flags for a few days, and keep ’em safe. That’s all we’ve got to do.”

“ Is that all ? ” cried Barnaby with glistening eyes, as he clutched his pole the tighter ; “ I warrant you I keep this one safe, then. You have put it in good hands. You know me, Hugh. Nobody shall wrest this flag away.”

“ Well said ! ” cried Hugh. “ Ha, ha ! Nobly said ! That’s the old stout Barnaby.—Don’t you see, man,” he added in a whisper, as he slipped to the other side of Dennis, “ that the lad’s a natural, and can be got to do anything, if you take him the right way. Letting alone the fun he is, he’s worth a dozen men, in earnest, as you’d

find if you tried a fall with him. Leave him to me. You shall soon see whether he's of use or not."

Mr Dennis received these explanatory remarks with many nods and winks, and softened his behaviour towards Barnaby from that moment. Hugh, laying his finger on his nose, stepped back into his former place, and they proceeded in silence.

It was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon when the three great parties met at Westminster, and, uniting into one huge mass, raised a tremendous shout. This was not only done in token of their presence, but as a signal to those on whom the task devolved, that it was time to take possession of the lobbies of both Houses, and of the various avenues of approach, and of the gallery stairs. To the last-named place, Hugh and Dennis, still with their pupil between them, rushed straightway; Barnaby having given his flag into the hands of one of their own party, who kept them at the outer door. Their followers pressing on behind, they were borne as on a great wave to the very doors of the gallery, whence it was impossible to retreat, even if they had been so inclined, by reason of the throng which choked up the passages. It is a familiar expression in describing a great crowd, that a person might have walked upon the people's heads. In this case it was actually done; for a boy who had by some means got among the concourse, and was in imminent danger of suffocation, climbed to the shoulders of a man beside him and walked upon the people's hats and heads into the open street; traversing in his passage the whole length of two staircases and a long gallery. Nor was the swarm without less dense; for a basket which had been tossed into the crowd was jerked from head to head, and shoulder to shoulder, and went spinning and whirling on above them, until it was lost to view, without ever once falling in among them or coming near the ground.

Through this vast throng, sprinkled doubtless here and

there with honest zealots, but composed for the most part of the very scum and refuse of London, whose growth was fostered by bad criminal laws, bad prison regulations, and the worst conceivable police, such of the members of both Houses of Parliament as had not taken the precaution to be already at their posts, were compelled to fight and force their way. Their carriages were stopped and broken ; the wheels wrenched off ; the glasses shivered to atoms ; the panels beaten in ; drivers, footmen, and masters, pulled from their seats and rolled in the mud. Lords, commoners, and reverend bishops, with little distinction of person or party, were kicked and pinched and hustled ; passed from hand to hand through various stages of ill-usage ; and sent to their fellow-senators at last with their clothes hanging in ribands about them, their bagwigs torn off, themselves speechless and breathless, and their persons covered with the powder which had been cuffed and beaten out of their hair. One lord was so long in the hands of the populace, that the peers as a body resolved to sally forth and rescue him, and were in the act of doing so, when he happily appeared among them covered with dirt and bruises, and hardly to be recognised by those who knew him best. The noise and uproar were on the increase every moment. The air was filled with execrations, hoots and howlings. The mob raged and roared, like a mad monster as it was, unceasingly, and each new outrage served to swell its fury.

Within doors, matters were even yet more threatening. Lord George—preceded by a man who carried the immense petition on a porter's knot through the lobby to the door of the House of Commons, where it was received by two officers of the House who rolled it up to the table ready for presentation—had taken his seat at an early hour, before the Speaker went to prayers. His followers pouring in at the same time, the lobby and all the avenues were immediately filled, as we have seen.

Thus the members were not only attacked in their passage through the streets, but were set upon within the very walls of Parliament ; while the tumult, both within and without, was so great, that those who attempted to speak could scarcely hear their own voices : far less, consult upon the course it would be wise to take in such extremity, or animate each other to firm and dignified resistance. So sure as any member, just arrived, with dress disordered and dishevelled hair, came struggling through the crowd in the lobby, it yelled and screamed in triumph ; and when the door of the House, partially and cautiously opened by those within for his admission, gave them a momentary glimpse of the interior, they grew more wild and savage, like beasts at the sight of prey, and made a rush against the portal which strained its locks and bolts in their staples, and shook the very beams.

The Strangers' Gallery, which was immediately above the door of the House, had been ordered to be closed on the first rumour of disturbance, and was empty ; save that now and then Lord George took his seat there, for the convenience of coming to the head of the stairs which led to it, and repeating to the people what had passed within. It was on these stairs that Barnaby, Hugh, and Dennis were posted. There were two flights, short, steep, and narrow, running parallel to each other, and leading to two little doors communicating with a low passage which opened on the gallery. Between them was a kind of well, or unglazed skylight, for the admission of light and air into the lobby, which might be some eighteen or twenty feet below.

Upon one of these little staircases—not that at the head of which Lord George appeared from time to time, but the other—Gashford stood with his elbow on the bannister, and his cheek resting on his hand, with his usual crafty aspect. Whenever he varied this attitude in the slightest degree—so much as by the gentlest motion of his arm—

the uproar was certain to increase, not merely there, but in the lobby below ; from which place, no doubt, some man who acted as fugleman to the rest, was constantly looking up and watching him.

“ Order ! ” cried Hugh, in a voice which made itself heard even above the roar and tumult, as Lord George appeared at the top of the staircase. “ News ! News from my lord ! ”

The noise continued, notwithstanding his appearance, until Gashford looked round. There was silence immediately—even among the people in the passages without, and on the other staircases, who could neither see nor hear, but to whom, notwithstanding, the signal was conveyed with marvellous rapidity.

“ Gentlemen,” said Lord George, who was very pale and agitated, “ we must be firm. They talk of delays, but we must have no delays. They talk of taking your petition into consideration next Tuesday, but we must have it considered now. Present appearances look bad for our success, but we must succeed, and will ! ”

“ We must succeed and will ! ” echoed the crowd. And so among their shouts and cheers and other cries, he bowed to them and retired, and presently came back again. There was another gesture from Gashford, and a dead silence directly.

“ I am afraid,” he said, this time, “ that we have little reason, gentlemen, to hope for any redress from the proceedings of Parliament. But we must redress our own grievances, we must meet again, we must put our trust in Providence, and it will bless our endeavours.”

This speech being a little more temperate than the last, was not so favourably received. When the noise and exasperation were at their height, he came back once more, and told them that the alarm had gone forth for many miles round ; that when the King heard of their assembling together in that great body, he had no doubt,

his Majesty would send down private orders to have their wishes complied with ; and—with the manner of his speech as childish, irresolute, and uncertain as his matter—was proceeding in this strain, when two gentlemen suddenly appeared at the door where he stood, and pressing past him and coming a step or two lower down upon the stairs, confronted the people.

The boldness of this action took them by surprise. They were not the less disconcerted, when one of the gentlemen, turning to Lord George, spoke thus—in a loud voice that they might hear him well, but quite coolly and collectedly :

“ You may tell these people, if you please, my lord, that I am General Conway of whom they have heard, and that I oppose this petition, and all their proceedings, and yours. I am a soldier, you may tell them, and I will protect the freedom of this place with my sword. You see, my lord, that the members of this House are all in arms to-day ; you know that the entrance to it is a narrow one ; you cannot be ignorant that there are men within these walls who are determined to defend that pass to the last, and before whom many lives must fall if your adherents persevere. Have a care what you do.”

“ And my Lord George,” said the other gentleman, addressing him in like manner, “ I desire them to hear this, from me—Colonel Gordon—your near relation. If a man among this crowd, whose uproar strikes us deaf, crosses the threshold of the House of Commons, I swear to run my sword that moment—not into his, but into your body ! ”

With that, they stepped back again, keeping their faces towards the crowd ; took each an arm of the misguided nobleman ; drew him into the passage, and shut the door ; which they directly locked and fastened on the inside.

This was so quickly done, and the demeanour of both gentlemen—who were not young men either—was so

gallant and resolute, that the crowd faltered and stared at each other with irresolute and timid looks. Many tried to turn towards the door; some of the faintest-hearted cried they had best go back, and called to those behind to give way; and the panic and confusion were increasing rapidly, when Gashford whispered Hugh.

"What now?" Hugh roared aloud, turning towards them. "Why go back? Where can you do better than here, boys? One good rush against these doors and one below at the same time will do the business. Rush on, then! As to the door below, let those stand back who are afraid. Let those who are not afraid try who shall be the first to pass it. Here goes! Look out, down there!"

Without the delay of an instant, he threw himself headlong over the bannisters into the lobby below. He had hardly touched the ground when Barnaby was at his side. The chaplain's assistant, and some members who were imploring the people to retire, immediately withdrew; and then with a great shout, both crowds threw themselves against the doors pell-mell, and besieged the House in earnest.

At that moment, when a second onset must have brought them into collision with those who stood on the defensive within, in which case great loss of life and bloodshed would inevitably have ensued—the hindmost portion of the crowd gave way, and the rumour spread from mouth to mouth that a messenger had been despatched by water for the military, who were forming in the street. Fearful of sustaining a charge in the narrow passages in which they were so closely wedged together, the throng poured out as impetuously as they had flocked in. As the whole stream turned at once, Barnaby and Hugh went with it: and so, fighting and struggling and trampling on fallen men, and being trampled on in turn themselves, they and the whole mass floated by degrees into the open street, where a large detachment of the Guards, both horse and

foot, came hurrying up ; clearing the ground before them so rapidly that the people seemed to melt away as they advanced.

The word of command to halt being given, the soldiers formed across the street ; the rioters, breathless and exhausted with their late exertions, formed likewise, though in a very irregular and disorderly manner. The commanding officer rode hastily into the open space between the two bodies, accompanied by a magistrate and an officer of the House of Commons, for whose accommodation a couple of troopers had hastily dismounted. The Riot Act was read, but not a man stirred.

In the first rank of the insurgents, Barnaby and Hugh stood side by side. Somebody had thrust into Barnaby's hands when he came out into the street his precious flag ; which, now being rolled up and tied round the pole, looked like a giant quarter-staff as he grasped it firmly and stood upon his guard. If ever man believed with his whole heart and soul that he was engaged in a just cause, and that he was bound to stand by his leader to the last, poor Barnaby believed it of himself and Lord George Gordon.

After an ineffectual attempt to make himself heard, the magistrate gave the word and the Horse Guards came riding in among the crowd. But, even then, he galloped here and there, exhorting the people to disperse ; and, although heavy stones were thrown at the men, and some were desperately cut and bruised, they had no orders but to make prisoners of such of the rioters as were the most active, and to drive the people back with the flat of their sabres. As the horses came in among them, the throng gave way at many points, and the Guards, following up their advantage, were rapidly clearing the ground, when two or three of the foremost, who were in a manner cut off from the rest by the people closing round them, made straight towards Barnaby and Hugh, who had no doubt

been pointed out as the two men who dropped into the lobby: laying about them now with some effect, and inflicting on the more turbulent of their opponents, a few slight flesh wounds, under the influence of which a man dropped here and there into the arms of his fellows, amid much groaning and confusion.

At the sight of gashed and bloody faces, seen for a moment in the crowd, then hidden by the press around them, Barnaby turned pale and sick. But he stood his ground, and grasping his pole more firmly yet, kept his eye fixed upon the nearest soldier—nodding his head meanwhile, as Hugh, with a scowling visage, whispered in his ear.

The soldier came spurring on, making his horse rear as the people pressed about him, cutting at the hands of those who would have grasped his rein and forced his charger back, and waving to his comrades to follow—and still Barnaby, without retreating an inch, waited for his coming. Some called to him to fly, and some were in the very act of closing round him, to prevent his being taken, when the pole swept into the air above the people's heads, and the man's saddle was empty in an instant.

Then he and Hugh turned and fled, the crowd opening to let them pass, and closing up again so quickly that there was no clue to the course they had taken. Panting for breath, hot, dusty, and exhausted with fatigue, they reached the riverside in safety, and getting into a boat with all despatch were soon out of any immediate danger.

As they glided down the river, they plainly heard the people cheering; and supposing they might have forced the soldiers to retreat, lay upon their oars for a few minutes, uncertain whether to return or not. But the crowd passing along Westminster Bridge soon assured them that the populace were dispersing; and Hugh rightly guessed from this, that they had cheered the magistrate for offering to dismiss the military on condition

of their immediate departure to their several homes, and that he and Barnaby were better where they were. He advised therefore, that they should proceed to Blackfriars, and, going ashore at the bridge, make the best of their way to The Boot ; where there was not only good entertainment and safe lodging, but where they would certainly be joined by many of their late companions. Barnaby assenting, they decided on this course of action, and pulled for Blackfriars accordingly.

They landed at a critical time, and fortunately for themselves, at the right moment. For, coming into Fleet-street, they found it in an unusual stir ; and, inquiring the cause, were told that a body of Horse Guards had just galloped past, and that they were escorting some rioters whom they had made prisoners to Newgate for safety. Not at all ill-pleased to have so narrowly escaped the cavalcade, they lost no more time in asking questions, but hurried to The Boot with as much speed as Hugh considered it prudent to make, without appearing singular or attracting an inconvenient share of public notice.

From "Barnaby Rudge"

THE TOMMY SHOP

THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD

THE last scene in the pageant is a picture of the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, days not so very far removed from our own. You read in the first story how iron was worked in the South of England. Here you see that the industrial region is now in the North and Midlands, and that coal, not wood, is required for the factories. You will do well to find out how many of the grievances of the people have been removed and what happened later to the People's Charter.

[A Butty in the mining districts is a middleman ; a Doggy is his manager. The Butty generally keeps a Tommy or Truck shop, and pays the wages of his labourers in goods. When miners and colliers strike they term it " going to play."]

THEY come forth : the mine delivers its gang and the pit its bondmen ; the forge is silent and the engine is still. The plain is covered with the swarming multitude : bands of stalwart men, broad-chested and muscular, wet with toil, and black as the children of the tropics ; troops of youth, alas ! of both sexes, though neither their raiment nor their language indicates the difference ; all are clad in male attire ; and oaths that men might shudder at issue from lips born to breathe words of sweetness. But can we wonder at the hideous coarseness of their language when we remember the savage rudeness of their lives ? Naked to the waist, an iron chain fastened to a belt of leather runs

between their legs clad in canvas trousers, while on hands and feet an English girl, for twelve, sometimes for sixteen hours a day, hauls and hurries tubs up subterranean roads, dark, precipitous, and plashy.

See, too, these emerge from the bowels of the earth! Infants of four and five years of age, many of them girls, pretty and still soft and timid ; entrusted with the fulfilment of responsible duties, and the nature of which entails on them the necessity of being the earliest to reach the mine and the latest to leave it. Their labour indeed is not severe, for that would be impossible, but it is passed in darkness and in solitude. Hour after hour elapses, and all that reminds the infant trappers of the world they have quitted and that which they have joined, is the passage of the coal-waggon for which they open the air-doors of the galleries, and on keeping which doors constantly closed, except at this moment of passing, the safety of the mine and the lives of the persons employed in it entirely depend.

A small party of miners approached a house of more pretension than the generality of the dwellings, and announcing its character by a flagrant sign of the Rising Sun. They entered it as men accustomed, and were greeted with smiles and many civil words from the lady at the bar, who enquired cheerfully what the gentlemen would have. They soon found themselves seated in the tap, and, though it was not entirely unoccupied, in their accustomed places ; for there seemed a general understanding that they enjoyed a prescriptive right.

With hunches of white bread in their hands, and grinning with their sable countenances and ivory teeth, they really looked like a gang of negroes at a revel.

The cups of ale circulated, the pipes were lighted, the preliminary puffs achieved. There was at length silence, when he who seemed their leader, and who filled a sort of president's seat, took his pipe from his mouth, and then,

uttering the first complete sentence that had yet been expressed aloud, thus delivered himself.

"The fact is, we are tommied to death."

"You never spoke a truer word, Master Nixon," said one of his companions.

"It's gospel, every word of it," said another.

"And the point is," continued Master Nixon, "what are we for to do?"

"Ay, surely," said a collier, "that's the marrow."

"Ay, ay," agreed several; "there it is."

"The question is," said Nixon, looking round with a magisterial air, "what *is* wages? I say, 'tayn't sugar, 'tayn't tea, 'tayn't bacon. I don't think 'tis candles; but of this I be sure, 'tayn't waistcoats."

Here there was a general groan.

"Comrades," continued Nixon, "you know what has happened; you know as how Juggins applied for his balance after his tommy-book was paid up, and that incarnate nigger Diggs has made him take two waistcoats. Now the question rises, what is a collier to do with waistcoats? Pawn 'em I s'pose to Diggs' son-in-law, next door to his father's shop, and sell the ticket for sixpence. Now, there's the question; keep to the question; the question is waistcoats and tommy; first waistcoats, and then tommy."

"I have been making a pound a-week these two months past," said another, "but, as I'm a sinner saved, I have never seen the young Queen's picture yet."

"And I have been obliged to pay the doctor for my poor wife in tommy," said another. "'Doctor,' I said, says I, 'I blush to do it, but all I have got is tommy, and what shall it be, bacon or cheese?' 'Cheese at tenpence a pound,' says he, 'which I buy for my servants at sixpence! Never mind,' says he, for he is a thorough Christian, 'I'll take the tommy as I find it.'"

"Juggins has got his rent to pay, and is afeard of the bums," said Nixon; "and he has got two waistcoats!"

" Besides," said another, " Diggs' tommy is only open once a-week, and if you're not there in time, you go over for another seven days. And it's such a distance, and he keeps a body there such a time ; it's always a day's work for my poor woman ; she can't do nothing after it, what with the waiting and the standing, and the cussing of Master Joseph Diggs ; for he do swear at the women, when they rush in for the first turn, most fearful."

" They do say he's a shocking little dog."

" Master Joseph is very violent, but there is no one like old Diggs for grabbing a bit of one's wages. He do so love it ! And then he says you never need be at no loss for nothing ; you can find everything under my roof. I should like to know who is to mend our shoes. Has Gaffer Diggs a cobbler's stall ? "

" Or sell us a penn'orth of potatoes," said another. " Or a ha'porth of milk."

" No ; and so to get them one is obliged to go and sell some tommy, and much one gets for it. Bacon at ninepence a pound at Diggs', which you may get at a huckster's for sixpence ; and therefore the huckster can't be expected to give you more than fourpence-halfpenny, by which token the tommy in our field just cuts our wages atween the navel."

" And that's as true as if you heard it in church, Master Waghorn."

" This Diggs seems to be an oppressor of the people," said a voice from a distant corner of the room.

Master Nixon looked around, smoked, puffed, and then said, " I should think he wor ; as bloody-a-hearted butty as ever jingled."

" But what business has a butty to keep a shop ? " inquired the stranger. " The law touches him."

" I should like to know who would touch the law," said Nixon ; " not I for one. Them tommy-shops is very delicate things ; they won't stand no handling, I can tell you that."

"But he cannot force you to take goods," said the stranger; "he must pay you in current coin of the realm, if you demand it."

"They only pay us once in five weeks," said a collier; "and how is a man to live meanwhile. And suppose we were to make shift for a month or five weeks, and have all our money coming, and have no tommy out of the shop, what would the butty say to me? He would say, 'Do you want e'er a note this time?' and if I was to say 'No,' then he would say, 'You've no call to go down to work any more here.' And that's what I call forsation."

"Ay, ay," said another collier; "ask for the young Queen's picture, and you would soon have to put your shirt on, and go up the shaft."

"It's them long reckonings that force us to the tommy-shops," said another collier; "and if a butty turns you away because you won't take no tommy, you're a marked man in every field about."

"There's wuss things as tommy," said a collier who had hitherto been silent, "and that's these here butties. What's going on in the pit is known only to God Almighty and the colliers. I have been a consistent methodist for many years, strived to do well, and all the harm I have ever done to the butties was to tell them that their deeds would not stand on the day of judgment."

"They are deeds of darkness surely; for many's the morn we work for nothing, by one excuse or another, and many's the good stint that they undermeasure. And many's the cup of their ale that you must drink before they will give you any work. If the Queen would do something for us poor men, it would be a blessed job."

"There ayn't no black tyrant on this earth like a butty, surely," said a collier; "and there's no redress for poor men."

"But why do not you state your grievances to the landlords and lessees?" said the stranger.

“ I take it you be a stranger in these parts, sir,” said Master Nixon, “ or else you would know that it’s as easy for a miner to speak to a main-master, as it is for me to pick coal with this here clay. Sir, there’s a gulf atween ’em. I went into the pit when I was five year old, and I counts forty year in the service come Martinmas, and a very good age, sir, for a man that does his work, and I knows what I’m speaking about. In forty year, sir, a man sees a pretty deal, ’specially when he don’t move out of the same spot and keeps his ’tention. I’ve been at play, sir, several times in forty year, and have seen as great stick-outs as ever happened in this country. I’ve seen the people at play for weeks together, and so clammed that I never tasted nothing but a potato and a little salt for more than a fortnight. Talk of tommy, that was hard fare, but we were holding out for our rights, and that’s sauce for any gander. And I’ll tell you what, sir, that I never knew the people play yet, but if a word had passed atween them and the main-masters aforehand, it might not have been settled ; but you can’t get at them any way. Atween the poor man and the gentleman there never was no connection, and that’s the wital mischief of this country.”

“ It’s a very true word, Master Nixon, and by this token that when we went to play in ’28, and the masters said they would meet us ; what did they do but walk about the ground and speak to the butties. The butties has their ear.

“ We never want no soldiers here if the masters would speak with the men ; but the sight of a pitman is pison to a gentleman, and if we go up to speak with ’em, they always run away.”

“ It’s the butties,” said Nixon ; “ they’re wusser nor tommy.”

Soon after this there were symptoms of empty mugs and exhausted pipes, and the party began to stir. The

stranger, addressing Nixon, inquired of him what was their present distance from Wodgate.

"Wodgate !" exclaimed Mr Nixon with an unconscious air.

"The gentleman means Hell-house Yard," said one of his companions.

It was a wet morning ; there had been a heavy rain since dawn, which, impelled by a gusty south-wester, came driving on a crowd of women and girls who were assembled before the door of a still closed shop. Some protected themselves with umbrellas ; some sought shelter beneath a row of old elms that grew alongside the canal that fronted the house. Notwithstanding the weather, the clack of tongues was incessant.

"I thought I saw the wicket of the yard gates open," said a woman.

"So did I," said her neighbour, "but it was shut again immediately."

"It was only Master Joseph," said a third. "He likes to see us getting wet through."

"If they would only let us into the yard and get under one of the workshop sheds, as they do at Simmon's," said another.

"You may well say Simmon's, Mrs Page ; I only wish my master served in his field."

"I have been here since half-past four, Mrs Grigsby, with this chilt at my breast all the time. It's three miles for me here, and the same back, and unless I get the first turn, how are my poor boys to find their dinner ready when they come out of the pit ?"

"A very true word, Mrs Page ; and by this token, that last Thursday, I was here by half-past eleven, certainly afore noon, having only called at my mother-in-law's in the way, and it was eight o'clock before I got home. Ah ! it's cruel work, is the tommy shop."

“How d’ye do, neighbour Prance?” said a comely dame, with a large white basket. “And how’s your good man? They were saying at Belfy’s he had changed his service. I hear there’s a new butty in Mr Parker’s field; but the old doggy kept on; so I always thought; he was always a favourite, and they do say measured the stints very fair. And what do you hear bacon is in town? They do tell me only sixpence, and real home-cured. I wonder Diggs has the face to be selling still at ninepence, and so very green! I think I see Dame Toddles; how wonderful she do wear! What are you doing here, little dear; very young to fetch tommy; keeping place for mother, eh! that’s a good girl; she’d do well to be here soon, for I think the strike’s on eight. Diggs is sticking it on yellow soap very terrible. What do you think—Ah! the doors are going to open. No—a false alarm.”

“How fare you, neighbour?” said a pale young woman, carrying an infant, to the comely dame. “Here’s an awful crowd, surely. The women will be fighting and tearing to get in, I guess. I be much afeard.”

“Well, ‘first come, first served,’ all the world over,” said the comely dame. “And you must put a good heart on the business, and tie your bonnet. I dare guess there are not much less than two hundred here. It’s grand tommy-day, you know. And for my part, I don’t care so much for a good squeege; one sees so many faces one knows.”

“The cheese here at sixpence is pretty tidy,” said a crone to her companion; “but you may get as good in town for fourpence.”

“What I complain of is the weights,” replied her companion. “I weighed my pound of butter bought last tommy-day, and it was two penny pieces too light. Indeed! I have been, in my time, to all the shops about here, for the lads or their father, but never knew tommy so bad as this. I have two children at home ill from their

flour ; I have been very poorly myself ; one is used to a little white clay, but when they lay it on thick, it's very grave."

"Are your girls in the pit ?"

"No ; we strive to keep them out, and my man has gone scores of days on bread and water for that purpose ; and if we were not forced to take so much tommy, one might manage ; but tommy will beat anything. Health first and honesty afterwards, that's my say."

"Well, for my part," said the crone, "meat's my grievance ; all the best bits go to the butties, and the pieces with bone in are chopped off for the colliers' wives."

"Dame, when will the door open ?" asked a little pale-faced boy. "I have been here all this morn, and never broke my fast."

"And what do you want, chilt ?"

"I want a loaf for mother ; but I don't feel I shall ever get home again. I'm all in a way so dizzy."

The door of Mr Diggs' tommy shop opened. The rush was like the advance into the pit of a theatre when the drama existed ; pushing, squeezing, fighting, tearing, shrieking. On a high seat, guarded by rails from all contact, sat Mr Diggs, senior, with a bland smile on his sanctified countenance, a pen behind his ear, and recommending his constrained customers in honeyed tones to be patient and orderly. Behind the substantial counter, which was an impregnable fortification, was his popular son, Master Joseph ; a short, ill-favoured cur, with a spirit of vulgar oppression and malicious mischief stamped on his visage. His black, greasy, lank hair, his pug nose, his coarse red face, and his projecting tusks, contrasted with the mild and lengthened countenance of his father, who looked very much like a wolf in sheep's clothing.

For the first five minutes Master Joseph Diggs did nothing but blaspheme and swear at his customers,

occasionally leaning over the counter and cutting the women in the van or lugging some girl by the hair.

"I was first, Master Joseph," said a woman eagerly.

"No ; I was," said another.

"I was here," said the first, "as the clock struck four, and seated myself on the steps, because I must be home early ; my husband is hurt in the knee."

"If you were first, you shall be helped last," said Master Joseph, "to reward you for your pains" ; and he began taking the orders of the other woman.

"Oh ! Lord have mercy on me !" said the disappointed woman ; "and I got up in the middle of the night for this !"

"More fool you ! And what you came for I am sure I don't know," said Master Joseph ; "for you have a pretty long figure against you, I can tell you that."

"I declare most solemnly——" said the woman.

"Don't make a brawling here," said Master Joseph, "or I'll jump over this here counter and knock you down, like nothink. What did you say, woman ? are you deaf ? What did you say ? how much best tea do you want ?"

"I don't want any, sir."

"You never want best tea ; you must take three ounces of best tea, or you shan't have nothing. If you say another word, I'll put you down four. You tall gal, what's your name, you keep back then, or I'll fetch you such a cut as 'll keep you at home till next reckoning. Cuss you, you old fool, do you think I am to be kept all day while you are mumbling here ? Who's pushing on there ? I see you, Mrs Page. Won't there be a black mark against you ! Oh ! it's Mrs Prance, is it ? Father, put down Mrs Prance for a peck of flour. I'll have order here. You think the last bacon a little too fat : oh ! you do, ma'am, do you ? I'll take care you shan't complain in future ; I likes to please my customers. There's a very nice flitch hanging up in the engine-room ; the men wanted some rust for

the machinery ; you shall have a slice of that ; and we'll say tenpence a pound, high-dried, and wery lean ; will that satisfy you ?

“ Order there, order ; you cussed women, order, or I'll be among you. And if I just do jump over this here counter, won't I let fly right and left ! Speak out, you idiot ! do you think I can hear your muttering in this Babel ? Cuss them ; I'll keep them quiet : ” and so he took up a yard measure, and, leaning over the counter, hit right and left.

“ Oh ! you little monster ! ” exclaimed a woman, “ you have put out my babby's eye.”

There was a murmur ; almost a groan. “ Whose baby's hurt ? ” asked Master Joseph, in a softened tone.

“ Mine, sir,” said an indignant voice ; “ Mary Church.”

“ Oh ! Mary Church, is it ! ” said the malicious imp ; “ then I'll put Mary Church down for half a pound of best arrowroot ; that's the finest thing in the world for babbies, and will cure you of bringing your cussed monkeys here, as if you all thought our shop was a hinfant school.

“ Where's your book, Susan Travers ? Left at home ! Then you may go and fetch it. No books, no tommy. You are Jones' wife, are you ? Ticket for three and sixpence out of eighteen shillings wages. Is this the only ticket you have brought ? There's your money ; and you may tell your husband he need not take his coat off again to go down our shaft. He must think us cussed fools ! Tell him I hope he has got plenty of money to travel into Wales, for he won't have no work in England again, or my name ayn't Diggs. Who's pushing there ? I'll be among you ; I'll close the shop. If I do get hold of some of you cussed women, you shan't forget it. If anyone will tell me who is pushing there, they shall have their bacon for sevenpence. Will nobody have bacon for sevenpence ? Leagued together, eh ? Then everybody shall have their bacon for tenpence. Two can play at that. Push again,

and I'll be among you," said the infuriated little tyrant. But the waving of the multitude, impatient, and annoyed by the weather, was not to be stilled; the movement could not be regulated; the shop was in commotion; and Master Joseph Diggs, losing all patience, jumped on the counter, and amid the shrieks of the women, sprang into the crowd. Two women fainted; others cried for their bonnets; others bemoaned their aprons; nothing, however, deterred Diggs, who kicked and cuffed and cursed in every quarter and gave none. At last there was a general scream of horror and a cry of "a boy killed!"

The senior Diggs, who from his eminence derived from these not unusual exhibitions the same agreeable excitement which a Roman emperor might have received from the combats of a circus, began to think that affairs were growing serious, and rose to counsel order. Even Master Joseph was quelled by that mild voice. It appeared to be quite true that a boy was dead. It was the little boy who, sent to get a loaf for his mother, had complained before the shop was opened of his fainting energies. He had fallen in the fray, and it was thought, to use the phrase of the comely dame who tried to rescue him, "that he was quite smothered."

They carried him out of the shop; the perspiration poured off him; he had no pulse. He had no friends there. "I'll stand by the body," said the comely dame, "though I lose my turn."

[Some time later.]

"It can't last," said Master Nixon, as he took his pipe from his mouth at the Rising Sun.

He was responded to by a general groan. "It comes to this," he continued. "Natur has her laws, and this is one: a fair day's wage for a fair day's work."

"I wish you may get it," said Juggins, "with a harder stint every week, and a shilling a day knocked off."

"And what's to come to-morrow?" said Waghorn.

"The buttty has given notice to quit in Parker's field this day se'nnight. Simmons won't drop wages, but works half-time."

"The boys will be at play afore long," said a collier.

"Hush!" said Master Nixon, with a reproving glance, "play is a very serious word. The boys are not to go to play as they used to without by your leave or with your leave. We must appoint a committee to consider the question, and we must communicate with other trades."

"You're the man, Master Nixon, to choose for church-warden," replied the reprovved miner, with a glance of admiration.

"What is Diggs doing?" said Master Nixon, in a solemn tone.

"A-dropping wages, and a-raising tommmy like fun," said Master Waghorn.

"There is a great stir in Hell-house Yard," said a miner who entered the tap-room at this moment, much excited. "They say that all the workshops will be shut to-morrow: not an order for a month past. They have got a top-sawyer from London there, who addresses them every evening, and says that we have a right to four shillings a day wages, eight hours' work, and two pots of ale."

"A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," said Master Nixon; "I would not stickle about hours, but the money and drink are very just."

"If Hell-house Yard is astir," said Waghorn, "there will be a good deal to be seen yet."

"It's grave," said Master Nixon. "What think you of a deputation there? It might come to good."

"I should like to hear the top-sawyer from London," said Juggins. "We had a Chartist here the other day, but he did not understand our case at all."

"I heard him," said Master Nixon; "but what's his Five Points to us? Why, he ayn't got tommmy among them."

"Nor long stints," said Waghorn.

"Nor butties," said Juggins.

"He's a pretty fellow to come and talk to us," said a collier. "He had never been down a pit in all his life."

On the morning after the conversation at the Rising Sun, the population, having as usual gone to their work, having penetrated the pit, and descended the shaft, the furnaces all blazing, the chimneys all smoking, suddenly there rose a rumour even in the bowels of the earth, that the hour and the man had at length arrived : the hour that was to bring them relief, and the man that was to bear them redress.

"My missus told it me at the pit-head, when she brought me my breakfast," said a pikeman to his comrade, and he struck a vigorous blow at the broad seam on which he was working.

"It is not ten mile," said his companion. "'They'll be here by noon."

"There is a good deal to do in their way," said the first pikeman. "All men at work after notice to be ducked, they say, and every engine to be stopped forthwith."

"Will the police meet them before they reach this ? "

"There is none ; my missus says that not a man John of them is to be seen. The Hell-cats, as they call themselves, halt at every town and offer fifty pounds for a live policeman."

"I'll tell you what," said the second pikeman, "I'll stop my stint and go up the shaft. My heart's all of a flutter. I can't work no more. We'll have a fair day's wage for a fair day's work yet."

"Come along, I'm your man ; if the doggy stops us, we'll knock him down. The people must have their rights ; we're driven to this ; but if one shilling a day is stopped, why not two ? "

"Very true ; the people must have their rights, and eight hours' work is quite enough."

In the light of day, the two miners soon learnt in more detail the news which the wife of one of them earlier in the morning had given as a rumour. There seemed now no doubt that the people of Wodgate, commonly called the Hell-cats, headed by their Bishop, had invaded in great force the surrounding district, stopped all the engines, turned all the potters out of the manufactories, met with no resistance from the authorities, and issued a decree that labour was to cease until the Charter was the law of the land.

The last edict was not the least surprising part of the whole affair ; for no one could have imagined that the Bishop or any of his subjects had ever even heard of the Charter. But this had been brought about by the unexpected and unobserved influence of individual character.

A Chartist leader had been residing for some time at Wodgate, ever since the distress had become severe, and had obtained great influence and popularity by assuring a suffering and half-starving population that they were entitled to four shillings a day and two pots of ale, and only eight hours' work. He was a man of abilities and of popular eloquence, and his representations produced an effect ; and the Chartist, who was careful never to speak of the Charter, became an important personage at Wodgate. At the right moment, everything being ripe and well prepared, the Bishop being very drunk and harassed by the complaints of his subjects, the Chartist revealed to him the mysteries of the Charter, and persuaded him not only that the Five Points would cure everything, but that he was the only man who could carry the Five Points.

The whole of the North of England and a great part of the midland counties were in a state of disaffection ; the entire country was suffering ; hope had deserted the labouring classes ; they had no confidence in any future of the existing system. Their organisation, independent of

the political system of the Chartists, was complete. Every trade had its union, and every union its lodge in every town and its central committee in every district. All that was required was the first move, and the Chartist emissary had long fixed upon Wodgate as the spring of the explosion, when the news of the strike in Lancashire determined him to precipitate the event.

The march of Bishop Hatton at the head of the Hell-cats into the mining districts was perhaps the most striking popular movement since the Pilgrimage of Grace. Mounted on a white mule, wall-eyed and of hideous form, the Bishop brandished a huge hammer with which he had announced that he would destroy the enemies of the people : all butties, doggies, dealers in truck and tommy, middle masters and main masters. Some thousand Hell-cats followed him, brandishing bludgeons, or armed with bars of iron, pick-handles, and hammers. On each side of the Bishop, on a donkey, was one of his little sons, as demure and earnest as if he were handling his file. A flowing standard of silk, inscribed with the Charter, and which had been presented to him by the delegate, was borne before him like the oriflamme. Never was such a gaunt, grim crew. As they advanced, their numbers continually increased, for they arrested all labour in their progress. Every engine was stopped, the plug was driven out of every boiler, every fire was extinguished, every man was turned out. The decree went forth that labour was to cease until the Charter was the law of the land.

During the strike in Lancashire the people had never plundered, except a few provision shops, chiefly rifled by boys, and their acts of violence had been confined to those with whom they were engaged in what, on the whole, might be described as a fair contest. They solicited sustenance often in great numbers, but even then their

language was mild and respectful, and they were easily satisfied and always grateful.

The Hell-cats and their followers were of a different temper from these gentle Lancashire insurgents. They destroyed and ravaged ; sacked and gutted houses ; plundered cellars ; proscribed bakers as enemies of the people ; sequestered the universal stores of all truck and tommy shops ; burst open doors, broke windows ; destroyed the gas-works, that the towns at night might be in darkness ; took union work-houses by storm, burned rate-books in the market-place, and ordered public distribution of loaves of bread and flitches of bacon to a mob ; cheering and laughing amid flames and rapine. In short, they robbed and rioted ; the police could make no head against them ; there was no military force ; the whole district was in their possession ; and, hearing that a battalion of the Coldstreams were coming down by a train, the Bishop ordered all railroads to be destroyed, and, if the Hell-cats had not been too drunk to do his bidding and he too tipsy to repeat it, it is probable that a great destruction of these public ways might have taken place.

A Wodgate girl, who was the daughter of a man who had worked many years in Diggs' field, had suffered much under his intolerable yoke, and at the present moment was deep in his awful ledger. She had heard from her first years of the oppression of Diggs, and had impressed it on her husband, who was intolerant of any tyranny except at Wodgate. Tummas and his wife, and a few chosen friends, therefore, went out one morning to settle the tommy-book of her father with Mr Diggs. A whisper of their intention had got about among those interested in the subject. It was a fine summer morning, some three hours from noon ; the shop was shut, indeed it had not been opened since the riots, and all the lower windows of the dwelling were closed, barred, and bolted.

A crowd of women had collected. There was Mistress Page and Mistress Prance, old Dame Toddles and Mrs Mullins, Liza Gray and the comely dame, who was so fond of society that she liked even a riot.

"Master Joseph, they say, has gone to the North," said the comely dame.

"I wonder if old Diggs is at home?" said Mrs Mullins.

"He won't show, I'll be sworn," said old Dame Toddles.

"Here are the Hell-cats," said the comely dame. "Well, I do declare, they march like reg'lars; two, four, six, twelve; a good score at the least."

The Hell-cats briskly marched up to the elm-trees that shaded the canal before the house, and then formed in line opposite to it. They were armed with bludgeons, crowbars, and hammers. Tummas was at the head, and by his side his Wodgate wife. Stepping forth alone, amid the cheering of the crowd of women, the pupil of the Bishop advanced to the door of Diggs' house, gave a loud knock, and a louder ring. He waited patiently for several minutes: there was no reply from the interior, and then Tummas knocked and rang again.

"It's very awful," said the comely dame.

"It's what I always dreamt would come to pass," said Liza Gray, "ever since Master Joseph cut my poor baby over the eye with his three-foot rule."

"I think there can be nobody within," said Mrs Prance.

"Old Diggs would never leave the tommy without a guard," said Mrs Page.

"Now, lads," said Tummas, looking round him and making a sign; and immediately some half-dozen advanced with their crowbars and were about to strike at the door, when a window in the upper story of the house opened, and the muzzle of a blunderbuss was presented at the assailants.

The women all screamed and ran away.

" 'Twas Master Joseph," said the comely dame, halting to regain her breath.

" 'Twas Master Joseph," sighed Mrs Page.

" 'Twas Master Joseph," moaned Mrs Prance.

" Sure enough," said Mrs Mullins. " I saw his ugly face."

" More frightful than the great gun," said old Dame Toddles.

" I hope the children will get out of the way," said Liza Gray, " for he is sure to fire on them."

In the meantime, while Master Joseph himself was content with his position and said not a word, a benignant countenance exhibited itself at the window, and requested in a mild voice to know, " What his good friends wanted there ? "

" We have come to settle Sam Barlow's tommy-book," said their leader.

" Our shop is not open to-day, my good friends : the account can stand over ; far be it from me to press the poor."

" Master Diggs," said a Hell-cat, " canst thou tell us the price of bacon to-day ? "

" Well, good bacon," said the elder Diggs, willing to humour them, " may be eightpence a pound."

" Thou art wrong, Master Diggs," said the Hell-cat, " 'tis fourpence and long credit. Let us see half a dozen good flitches at fourpence, Master Diggs ; and be quick."

There was evidently some controversy in the interior as to the course at this moment to be pursued. Master Joseph remonstrated against the policy of concession, called conciliation, which his father would fain follow, and was for instant coercion ; but age and experience carried the day, and in a few minutes some flitches were thrown out of the window to the Hell-cats, who received the booty with a cheer.

The women returned.

"'Tis the tenpence a pound flich," said the comely dame, examining the prize with a sparkling glance.

"I have paid as much for very green stuff," said Mrs Mullins.

"And now, Master Diggs," said Tummas, "what is the price of the best tea a-pound? We be good customers, and mean to treat our wives and sweethearts here. I think we must order half a chest."

This time there was a greater delay in complying with the gentle hint; but the Hell-cats, getting obstreperous, the tea was at length furnished and divided among the women. This gracious office devolved upon the wife of Tummas, who soon found herself assisted by a spontaneous committee, of which the comely dame was the most prominent and active member. Nothing could be more considerate, good-natured, and officious, than the mode and spirit with which she divided the stores. The fitches were cut up and apportioned in like manner. The scene was as gay and bustling as a fair.

"It is as good as grand tommy-day," said the comely dame, with a self-complacent smile, as she strutted about, smiling and dispensing patronage.

The orders for bacon and tea were followed by a popular demand for cheese. The female committee received all the plunder and were active in its distribution. At length a rumour got about that Master Joseph was entering the names of all present in the tommy-books, so that eventually the score might be satisfied. The mob had now much increased. There was a panic among the women, and indignation among the men: a Hell-cat advanced and announced that, unless the tommy-books were all given up to be burnt, they would pull down the house. There was no reply: some of the Hell-cats advanced; the women cheered; a crowbar fell upon the door; Master Joseph fired, wounded a woman and killed a child.

There rose one of those universal shrieks of wild passion

which announce that men have discarded all the trammels of civilisation, and found in their licentious rage new and unforeseen sources of power and vengeance. Where it came from, how it was obtained, who prompted the thought, who first accomplished it, were alike impossible to trace ; but, as it were in a moment, a number of trusses of straw were piled up before the house and set on fire, the gates of the timber-yard were forced, and a quantity of scantlings and battens soon fed the flame. Everything indeed that could stimulate the fire was employed ; and everyone was occupied in the service. They ran to the water side and plundered the barges, and threw the huge blocks of coal upon the enormous bonfire. Men, women, and children were alike at work with the eagerness and energy of fiends. The roof of the house caught fire : the dwelling burned rapidly ; you could see the flames like the tongues of wild beasts, licking the bare and vanishing walls ; a single being was observed amid the fiery havoc, shrieking and desperate ; he clung convulsively to a huge account-book. It was Master Joseph. His father had made his escape from the back of the premises and had counselled his son instantly to follow him, but Master Joseph wished to rescue the ledger as well as their lives, and the delay ruined him.

“ He has got the tommy-book,” cried Liza Gray.

The glare of the clear flame fell for a moment upon his countenance of agony : the mob gave an infernal cheer ; then, some part of the building falling in, there rose a vast cloud of smoke and rubbish, and he was seen no more.

From “Sybil”

EXERCISES

GANDOC THE BRITON : *Naomi Mitchison*

1. Explain carefully Meromic's grievance against Gandoc. How far was his revenge on the Briton justified ?
2. What information do you gather from this extract relating to domestic life in Ancient Britain ?
3. Can you find anything to admire in the character of Titus ?
4. Contrast Meromic and Lerrys and explain the latter's scruples at aiding his friend in his scheme of vengeance.
5. Why was Gandoc an important hostage ?
6. What light is thrown by this narrative on Roman civilization ?
7. What part of England do you think was the scene of this story and why ? What great changes have taken place there ?

A SPOILT PRINCE : *Lord Lytton*

1. "They say in Normandy that the boy is imbecile." How would you describe him ?
2. How does Canute enter into this story ? Explain his importance in English history.
3. Look up the meaning of *thegn*, *ceorl*, *Witan*.
4. What personages mentioned here occupied the English throne at various times ? Which of them influenced our history most ?
5. Contrast the Atheling's education with that of a modern prince.
6. "Saxon tongue ! Language of villeins !" Can you suggest any common words in English that help to prove this ?

HOW THEY FOUGHT AT ALDRETH : *Charles Kingsley*

1. "The rats have set a trap for themselves." Explain.
2. Why was Ely no easy prey after all ?
3. What were mercenaries and in what other wars have you heard of them ?
4. "You fellows are worth fighting, you French !" Why ?
5. Describe briefly the events preceding this battle.
6. How did William eventually succeed ?

THE TOURNAMENT AT ASHBY : *Sir Walter Scott*

1. What laws of the tournament can you gather from this narrative ? Add any others you know.
2. Explain : Saracenic music ; Templar ; *Cave, Adsum* ; largesse ; Provost of the Games.
3. Who was Locksley, and how did he become a popular hero ?
4. What can you learn here about the state of England at the time of this tournament ?
5. "Take heed to yourself, for the Devil is unchained !" Explain the meaning of this message and its effect upon Prince John.
6. What social differences are illustrated in this narrative ?
7. How does this episode show that Saxon and Norman were still at odds ?
8. Contrast the equipment and training of a knight and a yeoman.

A POET OF THE PEASANT REVOLT : *J. C. Andrews*

1. What other poets helped to inspire the Peasants' Revolt ? Quote a famous couplet which became a motto of the rebels.
2. Explain briefly how Piers made a living.
3. What do you learn from this extract about the causes of the Revolt ? (You should read *Long Will*, an historical romance by Florence Converse, to help you understand the attitude of the peasants.)
4. Who were the enemies of the people mentioned in the story ?
5. What was Piers' chief ambition and how was it realized ?
6. Explain the hermit's prophecy.
7. What leaders of the Peasants' Revolt are mentioned here ? What became of them ?
8. Why was Canterbury a famous place for pilgrims ?

THE BATTLE OF SHOREBY : *R. L. Stevenson*

1. What are your impressions of Richard of Gloucester as he is described here ?
2. Give a brief account of his subsequent career.
3. Relate how Dick Shelton "won his spurs."
4. What important period of history does this incident illustrate ? Explain how England came to be in such a troubled state at this time.
5. "Two Richards are we." Contrast them.
6. What was Crookback's plan of battle, and how did it nearly fail ?

WOLSEY'S FALL : *W. Harrison Ainsworth*

1. Who were Wolsey's chief enemies according to this narrative ?
2. What was the real cause of his downfall ?
3. Explain the part played by Campeggio.
4. What results important to English history followed this series of events ?
5. Would you call this disgrace of Wolsey a dramatic scene ?
Who has treated it successfully in a play ?
6. Who was Will Sommers ?
7. How was Wolsey's prophecy fulfilled (a) about himself ;
(b) about Anne Boleyn ?

THE GREAT ARMADA : *Charles Kingsley*

1. Which incidents in this narrative are historical facts and which are fiction ?
2. Who was the Lord High Admiral of England, and what references are made to him ?
3. Describe the part played in this battle by the *Vengeance* and the *Sta Catharina*.
4. "These were the spectres . . . which flitted before the eyes of every Englishman, and filled his heart and brain with fire." Explain.
5. What is the importance of Drake's letter in connexion with this episode ?
6. "Oh for powder, powder, powder !" Discuss the significance of this cry.
7. In what other connexion have you heard of Hawkins and Frobisher ?
8. Draw a sketch-map to illustrate the course of the battle.
9. What different types of ships are mentioned ?

THE WHITE KING : *G. J. Whyte-Melville*

1. Which of the characters in this episode are historical and which imaginary ?
2. What excuse had Cromwell for signing the King's death warrant ?
3. Explain Effingham's "protest against the *murder* of Charles Stuart."
4. Why may Henry Brampton's plan be described as a "forlorn hope" ?
5. How are our sympathies awakened on behalf of the King ?

6. Explain the references to the Dictator ; the Dons on the Spanish Main ; hot Rupert's towering form ; the shattered rout of Naseby's fatal field.
7. " It is a splendid pageant, truly, that of a king's life." How does the life of Charles I illustrate this ?

SLAUGHTER IN THE MARSHES : *R. D. Blackmore*

1. Why did John Ridd call his expedition a wild-goose chase ? Was this description justified ?
2. What can you learn from this episode about the composition of " King Monmouth's " army ?
3. " Winnie is the heroine of the story." Do you agree ?
4. What is the value of this piece of war-description ?
5. Explain the historical importance of the rebellion. What was John's attitude toward it ?
6. What actual information is given about Tom Faggus ?
7. How did the nature of the countryside affect the issue of the battle ?

A PLOT THAT FAILED : *W. M. Thackeray*

1. What period does this story deal with ? Against whom was the plot aimed ?
2. Explain briefly how it failed.
3. Summarize the part played by Father Holt, and account for his interest in the affair.
4. Who is the hero of the story, and why do you think so ?
5. What do you know of " Dick the Scholar " ?
6. Where do you consider the chief interest in this narrative lies ?

A SKIRMISH IN THE '45 : *Sir Walter Scott*

1. " Our fine adventure is now totally ruined." Can you explain ?
2. How does the supernatural enter into this story ?
3. Who was " this poor Prince, whom they are leading back like a dog on a string " ?
4. " They will make root-and-branch work, I warrant them." Of whom were these words spoken and how did they come true ?
5. Explain the allusion to Sherifmuir.

THE NO POPERY RIOTS : *Charles Dickens*

1. Find out from a history text-book why these riots occurred in 1780. (What had happened in 1778 to arouse opposition to Parliament ?)
2. Had Lord George Gordon any qualities as a leader ? Try to describe his character in a sentence.
3. "The Riot Act was read." Explain.
4. What was the petition presented by the crowd ?
5. Write a short descriptive sketch of a mob.
6. What are your impressions of Barnaby ?

THE TOMMY SHOP : *The Earl of Beaconsfield*

1. This is a terrible picture of industrial conditions round about 1840. How far have they been improved ?
2. What grievances had the miners against the Diggs family ?
3. Explain the reference to the Charter.
4. What does this extract tell you about the Hell-cats and their leader (nicknamed the Bishop) ?
5. Can you think of any characters in fiction as bad as Joseph Diggs ?
6. Explain the allusion to the Pilgrimage of Grace.
7. What references are made to strikes in this narrative ? Describe briefly the effects of a strike to-day.
8. Contrast the characters of the women mentioned.

